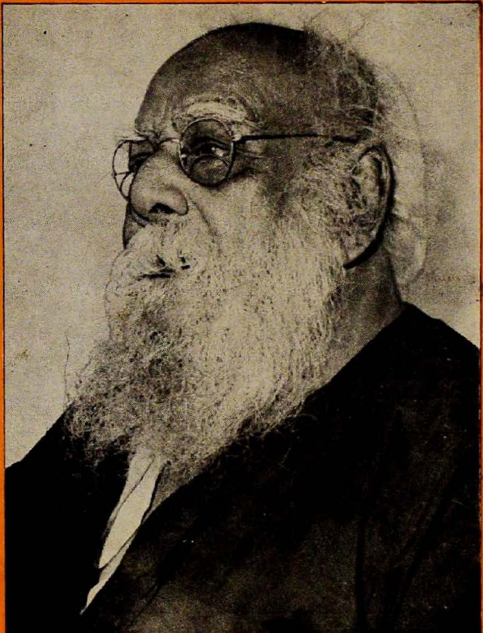
THE POLITICAL CAREER

of E.V. Ramasami Naicker



Dr. E. Sa. Visswanathan

THE

POLITICAL CAREER

OF

E. V. RAMASAMI NAICKER

A STUDY IN THE POLITICS OF TAMILNADU

1920 - 1949

Dr. E. Sa. VISSWANATHAN, M.A. (Madras)
M. A. (Malaya), Ph.D. (A. N. U., Australia)

RAVI & VASANTH PUBLISHERS

MADRAS-600 020

First Edition 1983

Price: Rs. 90/-

Copies Available at :

RAVI & VASANTH PUBLISHERS,
Shop No : 20, I Avenue,
Shastrinagar, Adyar,
MADRAS-600 020

Printed at: Rex Printers, Mylapore, Madras-600 004. Phone: 74827.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As E. V. Ramasami Naicker's movement grew out of opposition to the Brahman ritual superiority and their political dominance in society, this study starts with an analysis of how, over the centuries, the Brahmans combined ritual authority and landownership with political leadership and gained pre-eminence in the country, and how this was challenged in the last quarter of the nineteenth century first by the non-Brahman intellectuals and later by the political leaders. The first organized effort to challenge the Brahman political leadership came about when the non-Brahman leaders banded themselves into a political party and participated in the legislatures established in the Presidency of Madras under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919. However, the first attempt to arouse the non-Brahman masses and to create in them a sense of pride in their cultural and historical traditions and an awareness of their rightful place in society was made by Naicker, a staunch nationalist, who in early 1926 launched the Self-Respect movement in the Tamil districts of the presidency. This work seeks to examine how Naicker rose in the party hierarchy of the Madras Provincial Congress and what groups gave him support. Further it examines the causes that led Naicker to leave the Tamilnad Congress and organize a radical movement in the Tamil country. In doing so it also examines the radicalism of Naicker, the objectives of the movement he fathered, the means he adopted to disseminate the new cultural and political values in the community and the castes and communities to whom he appealed. Naicker's probings in order to align himself with non-Brahman political parties, his attitude to the Congress and its policies as well as his pro-British and pro-bureaucratic stance are analyzed. As he was concerned with the ultimate results of the constitutional processes and not with its details, this study touches only on the broad aspects of these changes in so far as they held the attention of Naicker.

The radical Self-Respect movement was further radicalized under the influence of Soviet style communism in the 1930's.

This study, besides delineating this new phase of the movement, seeks to examine the reasons that motivated Naicker on the one hand and the Justice leaders on the other to come to a political understanding in 1934. It also proposes to show how this informal alliance between Naicker and the Justicites failed to improve the Justice Party's prospects in the 1934 or in the 1937 elections, and how it enabled Naicker to become the leader of the party in 1938.

After a landslide victory over the Justice Party in the 1937 elections for the provincial legislative assembly, the Congress headed by C. Rajagopalachariar formed the ministry in Madras later that year. Within a year of coming to power the Congress ministry introduced Hindi as a compulsory subject of study in some of the lower secondary schools in the presidency. What this language policy meant to the Tamil academics and the non-Brahman politicians opposed to the Congress, and how the fears of the educated non-Brahmans concerning imposition of Hindi was exploited by Naicker to awaken Dravidian nationalism among the masses are investigated in this study.

The effects of the 1937 electoral defeat on the Justice Party on the one hand, and on Naicker on the other, will be assessed. It is evident that the defeat was a crushing blow to the Justicites and that it provoked considerable searching of heart among them. The tangible effect of all this was an invitation to Naicker to assume the leadership of the organization. This study seeks to examine what Naicker did to the party organization on taking over the leadership; why it declined, and what considerations weighed with Naicker's principal followers like Annadurai, to rechristen the Justice Party as the Dravida Kazhagam in 1944. In doing so, the study focuses attention on the emergence of the Annadurai-Naicker alliance in politics and the impact it had on the Justice organization in the 1940's.

On the adoption of Annadurai's resolution at the Salem conference in 1944, the old-guard of the Justice Party decided to break away from the then transformed organization to form a splinter group of their own, which facilitated the emergence of Naicker and Annadurai as the only two important leaders in the D. K. This thesis briefly examines the progress of the D.K., the hopes

it raised among its followers and the set-back it received in 1949. It also shows how Annadurai was able to build up an independent following both in the party and in the Tamil districts and with what techniques he became a leader of importance in the 1940's.

As this study is approached from the broad biographical context of Naicker, only the relevant factual details concerning the Tamilnad Congress, the Justice Party and the Ministerial Party are brought into focus.

This book is based on the doctoral thesis submitted to the Australian National University, Canberra, Australia, in 1973. I owe a deep debt of gratitude for the guidance and insight which my supervisors, Professors A. L. Basham, J. A. La Nauze and Dr. J. D. P. Jordens, had provided during the preparation of the thesis between 1969 and 1972. I am deeply indebted to Professor U. S. Ramachandran of Madras, whose suggestions on the present work were very pointed and encouraging.

I am indebted to Professor M. S. Rajan of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi for requesting Mr. B. Vivekanandan, a research scholar under him, to make a survey and collect available material pertaining to my work both at the National Archives of India and the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in New Delhi. For the arduous task of collecting the available material I am grateful to Mr. Vivekanandan.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Australian National University, for awarding me a scholarship and for financing twelve months of field work in India between 1968 and 1969, which made the doctoral dissertation possible. For the successful completion of the field work in 1969, I am indebted to the Government of Tamil Nadu for permitting me to refer to some of the confidential Native Newspaper Reports at the State Archives in Madras for the period 1920 to 1949, to the editors of *Mail*, *Viduthalai*, and *Nam Nadu*, for allowing me to look into the old files of their papers and to the librarians and staff of the University of Madras Library, the Connemara Public Library, the Maraimalai Adigal Library, the Madras Legislative Assembly Library and the Theosophical Society Library in Madras, for their help and cooperation. I also wish to acknowledge the assistance I received from the staff of the Australian National

Library in Canberra, the University of Western Australia Library in Perth and from the staff of the Menzies Library of the Australian National University, especially Mr. P. Clayton and Mrs. F. Malcolm at the reference desk.

My field work would not have been a success but for the enthusiasm shown by Mr. P. K. Swaminathan and Mr. R. Selvaraj. The former was responsible for introducing me to a number of political figures and arranging interviews with them and the latter helped me in the difficult task of tracing and obtaining relevant material for my thesis.

In response to my requests a number of people, some of them active participants in the Dravidian Movement and in the Indian National Congress at some stage or other, helped me in various ways. They were kind enough to grant me interviews, at which they talked readily about their roles in the movement and shared their experiences with me. Some have lent their books and given access to very important private collections of documents. I can only tender thanks to Thiru Tantai Periyar E. V. Ramasami Naicker himself, and to Messrs. S. Ramanathan, M. Bhaktavatsalam, K. M. Balasubramaniam, T. P. Vedachalam, Kanchi Kalyanasundaram, C. V. Rajagopal, K. Thangavelu Mudaliar, K. Sivagnanam, Murasoli Maran, A. V. P. Asaithambi, Sampath Kumar, C. P. Raghupathi, P. S. Sambasivam, A. U. Thiru Inban, S. Apparsundaram, C. D. Natarajan, A. V. Jayachandran, Nilkantan Nampudri, Sir P. T. Rajan, Raja Sir Muthiah Chettiyar, Professor M. Varadarajan, former Vice-Chancellor of Madurai Kamaraj University and the Minister for Finance, Government of Tamil Nadu, the Hon. V. R. Nedunchezhian and others too numerous to mention.

I cannot adequately thank my respected teacher, Professor A. L. Basham, for his valuable preface to this book. Finally, I am greatly indebted to my wife, Vasanthakumari, for much encouragement.

In this study no single system of spelling Indian words has been adopted. In the case of proper names the old usage is adhered to as far as possible. All words written in Tamil irrespective of their origins, and titles of Tamil books, are transliterated according to the scheme followed in the Tamil Lexicon.

Diacritical marks are used for the Tamil books included in the bibliography. In conformity to Tamil tradition, the caste name 'Chetti' is appended with honorific suffix 'ar' to read 'Chettiar' when followed by first names. The proper name 'Ramasami' is spelt in different ways, such as Ramaswami, Ramaswamy and Ramasamy; the spelling used in this thesis is Naicker's own usage. Although Ramasami Naicker dropped his caste title 'Naicker' after the first Self-Respect Conference held in 1929, the title is retained in this study, as he has been known to the outside world rather as Naicker and, of late, as Tantai Periyar or 'Venerable father' than as Ramasami.

ABBREVIATIONS

AICC	All India Congress Committee
D. K.	Dravida Kazhagam
D. M. K.	Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
MLAD	Madras Legislative Assembly Debates
MPA	Madras Presidency Association
MPCC	Madras Pradesh Congress Committee
Ms. NNR.	Madras Presidency Native Newspaper Reports
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MRO	Madras Record Office
NAI	National Archives of India
NMML	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
PMLC	Proceedings of the Madras Legislative Council
Rajaji	C. Rajagopalachariar
TNCC	Tamilnad Congress Committee
RTO	Round Table Conference

GLOSSARY

Arivili	Man lacking knowledge or judgement
Brahmana Atiyatkal	Slaves of Brahmans
Brahmadesas	Brahman villages
Cilappatikaram	A famous Tamil epic poem of controversial date, probably composed around the middle of the first millennium A. D.
Dhoti	A four yard cloth worn by men around the waist, reaching the feet
Inam	A gift; grant of land free of land revenue
Inamdari	System of land tenure under which lands are held wholly or partially free of land revenue
Jathas	Brigades
Jathi	Caste
Jibba	A loose full sleeved shirt
Karnams	Village accountants, corresponding to modern district officers
Khaddar	Hand-spun and hand-woven cloth
Kolam	Decorations on the floor drawn with rice flour
Kulippataikal	Hirelings
Kuranai } *Samba* }	Varieties of rice
Maths	Religious institutions where religious and literary studies were pursued
Namam	Sacred mark put on the forehead, mostly by the Vaishnavites
Pandal	Temporarily erected canopy of coconut or palm leaves

Periyar	Venerable or great man
Pulaiyan	Professional drummer
Punul	A cotton thread worn across the chest by the twice born Brahman
Purananuru	A collection of four hundred Tamil poems, written during the early centuries of the Christian era
Purna Swaraj	Full or complete political independence
Purohita	Brahman priest who performs religious rites in non-Brahman houses. Those who perform similar rites in Brahman houses are called *Vattiyar*
Sabhas	Brahman villages
Sri	Equivalent to 'mister'
Swadesi	Belonging to one's own country, indigenous
Tali	A yellow thread tied with a gold ornament to indicate that a woman is married
Tamil Turokikal	Traitors to the Tamil language
Thiruvalar	Equivalent to 'mister'
Thoranam	Arch, Festoon
Uccikkudumi	A tuft of hair on the head
Vedagarar	Persons engaged in weaving mats, baskets and other household articles with bamboos and palmyra leaves
Videsi	Foreign

PREFACE

The late Ramaswami Naicker was an exceptional figure in the history of India. Where most Indian reformers have tended to rationalize prevailing religious beliefs, to disparage certain features of Hinduism, such as the caste system or idolatry, but to maintain its fundamental doctrines and creeds, Ramaswami Naicker set himself against his ancestral faith root and branch, and to the very end of his long and busy life he and his followers continued their propaganda against all aspects of Hinduism, and, largely by implication, other religions also. It was a vigorous, sometimes even scurrilous propaganda, as I remember from my first visit to Madras, when I saw to my great amazement a poster outside a temple, showing Hindu gods, with all their traditional attributes, engaged in such nefarious and ungodlike pursuits as love-making and getting drunk. When I passed the same place a couple of days later the poster had disappeared — not surprisingly.

The author of this biography, to my knowledge, does not support Ramaswami Naicker's philosophy by any means, any more than I do myself. He is a believing Hindu, and hence it is the more to his credit that he has given the world so sympathetic an account of the life of a very earnest, good and sincere man, who with burning faith (or better, perhaps, anti-faith) unceasingly struggled against something which he considered harmful to his fellow men.

Ramaswami Naicker was not, perhaps, so far removed from the main stream of Indian thought as at first appears. Even in the early Buddhist Scriptures we are treated to a description of the god Brahmā, falsely imagining that he has created the world, when in fact it arose through natural causes.[1] A sect of materialists, the Cārvākas or Lokāyatas, certainly existed in ancient India, though we are not sure whether they rejected the existence of the gods outright or, like the Epicureans of classical Europe, admitted their existence but declared that they had no real effect on the world. Cynical or even scornful remarks about religious dogmas are to be found here and there in ancient Indian literature — 'The Three

---

[1] *Digha Nikaya* 3.28 ff.

Vedas are a mere pretext for the man who knows the way of the world' says the *Arthasastra* ascribed to Kautilya.[1] Ramaswami Naicker's inspiration in his anti-religious campaigning no doubt came chiefly from the west, but he was not by any means un-Indian in his opposition to religions and priestcraft.

Ramaswami Naicker will be remembered chiefly, no doubt, for his anti-religious and anti-caste campaigning, but he played a very significant part in the politics of South India, down to the time of his death. His influence in this respect has perhaps been underestimated. After a brief flirtation with Communism his politics moved rather to the right, while his socio-religious attitude remained unchanged, and he emerged as one of the leading opponents of Congress in the South. His relations with C. R. Rajagopalachari are particularly interesting, and significant; and it is evident from reading this book that the Tamil nationalist movement associated with the names of Annadurai and Karunanidhi owes much to him in its early stages.

Dr. E. Sa. Visswanathan has produced a detailed and objective study of the life of this great man, and has brought much unpublished material to bear on his theme. Particularly important as sources were his interviews with many South Indian elder politicians, including the venerable Ramaswami himself. The author has shown great assiduity, enterprise, and industry in gathering his material, and has produced a thorough, well-written and judicious study of a great man, who compels admiration foı his burning sincerity and intense moral courage, whatever we may think of his policy.

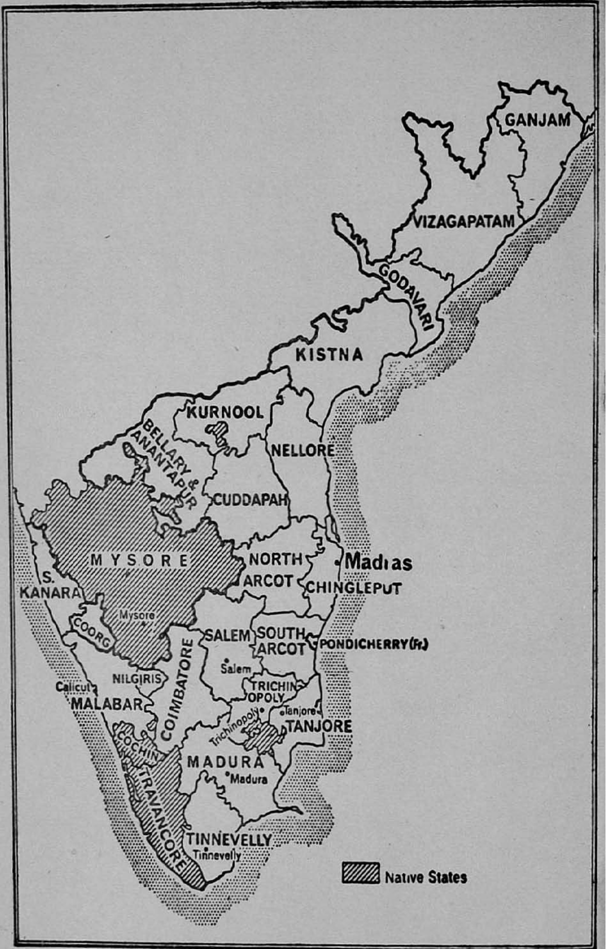
A. L. Basham
The University of New Mexico,
ALBUQUERQUE, U. S. A. 1982

---

1 Ed. R. P. Kangle, University of Bombay, 1960, 1·2·5. The author here appears to be quoting the views of an earlier teacher.

MAPS AND TABLES

Maps



Madras Presidency

CHAPTER — I

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

In the days before Independence, the Presidency of Madras was one of the largest provinces of British India, extending over an area of 141,000 square miles with a population of 44 million. Bounded by the sea on the east, south and west, its eastern and western coast lines ran about 1,700 miles. The eastern coast line which started from the Chilka lake on the Coromandel coast ran southwards to Cape Comorin, the tip of the Indian peninsula, which juts out into the Indian Ocean. From this point the western coast line ran northwards and terminated at the southern boundaries of the North Kanara district on the Malabar coast. From here the land boundary on the north ran in a north-easterly direction along the borders of the Presidency of Bombay, the states of Mysore and Hyderabad, and the Central Provinces until the frontier of Bengal was reached, when the boundary turned due east to the Chilka Lake. Within these geographical limits, besides the British districts of Madras Presidency, the five native states of Travancore, Cochin, Pudukkotta, Banganapalle and Sandur were included. Of these only Travancore figures in this study.

For the purpose of this study the Presidency of Madras can be divided on a linguistic basis into four distinct regions—Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam and Kanarese. Andhra Desa or the Telugu country, which lay in the northern part of the presidency, comprised the preponderantly Telugu-speaking districts of Vizagapatam, Godạvari, Kistna, Guntur, Kurnool, Bellary, Anantapur, Cuddapah and Nellore. From these districts came not only the leadership but the material resources for the South Indian Liberal Federation, popularly known as the Justice Party. To the south lay Tamilnad, the centre of the activities of E. V. Ramasami Naicker, containing the districts of Chingleput, North Arcot, South Arcot, Salem, Coimbatore, Trichinopoly, Tanjore, Madura, Ramnad and Tinnevelly. Although a predominantly Tamil-speaking area, the Telugus form a powerful minority in the districts of North Arcot, Madura, Salem and Coimbatore even to this day. The Kanarese and the Malayalam districts, of South Kanara and Malabar respectively, lay on the west coast.

The people of South Kanara played a limited role in the Justice Party, and they seldom participated in any of the activities of the Dravidian Federation, commonly known as the Dravida Kazhagam or D.K. Compared to the Kanarese, the Malayalis evinced greater interest in the Justice Party and one of its founder leaders, Dr. T. M. Nair, was a Malayəli, though he spent over 15 years of his life in the Tamils-dominated Madras City. After his death Krishnan Nayar and to a lesser extent, C. G. Netto, were active in the Justice Party. Netto was a follower of Naicker. The Malayalam weeklies like *Kerala Sanchari*, *Keralodayam* and *Malayali* played a conspicuous role in propagating the political message of the Justice Party among the people of the west coast. Later some of these papers spread Naicker's message of self-respect. Nonetheless Naicker's main supporters were from the Tamil districts of the composite State of Madras.

The four linguistic regions including the princely states of Mysore and Hyderabad were known as the land of the Dravidians. The term Dravidian is now used generally to denote linguistic groups, but Naicker and his followers employed it to mark racial groups as well.

The triple hold of Brahman minority in the social, religious and political leadership of Tamil Society over that of non-Brahman majority gave birth to the Self-Respect movement led by Ramasami Naicker in the late 1920's. The reasons for Brahman dominance over the majority communities demand examination. Was the rise of Brahmans a phenomenon peculiar to the 19th century? Or was it a gradual and an imperceptible one?

When looking into the emergence of Brahmans as an important class in Tamil society, one must bear in mind a few factors in the dynamics of cultural syncretization. First and foremost one must understand what was the strength of the cultural traditions of the two societies that came into contact with each other and which of the cultures was more potent and had more enduring characteristics. Then we must acknowledge that the time factor was important. In so far as the Aryan and Dravidian cultural syncretization process is concerned we must try to understand at what rate the process of assimilation took place. This is necessary in order to trace the rise and growth of Brahmans as an important socio-political class.

K. A. Nilakanta Sastri states that the 'Āryanization of the South was doubtless a slow process spread over several centuries'.[1] This process of cultural syncretization occurred when Brahmans from the North migrated to the South with their religion, culture and social institutions based on the four fold caste system.

The golden age of the Tamils was the *Sangam*[2] period. (circā A. D. 100 to 250.) This was the period when Tamil literary traditions were crystallized. It was during this period that we find reference made to the existence of Brahmans living in exclusive quarters, practising endogamy and engaging in literary pursuits.[3] To assume at this stage that caste or *varna* system automatically diffused itself in Tamil society is to beg the question. The concept of caste as defined in the *Rg Veda* with its four-fold system was unknown in Tamil society. One of the *Sangam* works, the *Purananuru*, shows that one's social status in society was not inherited but based on merit.[4] At the same time it points to the existence of the concept of high and low in social hierarchy of the *Sangam* period.[5] A post-*Sangam* work, *Cilappatikaram*, points to the existence of the concept of ritual purity and impurity.[6] A grammatical treatise, of this period, *Tolkappiyam*, was the first work which attempts to classify Tamil society into the four-fold system on the basis of *varna* or *jathi* in which Brahmans were given a pre-eminent place.[7] The commentators of *Tolkappiyam* accepted this classification.[8] Brahmans were accorded a very high ritual

---

1 K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India from Prehistoric Times to the Fall of Vijayanagar*, second ed. (London, 1958), p. 75.

2 *Sangam*: (literally 'Society'). A Tamil literary academy, the existence of which is doubted by some scholars. Whether it ever existed or not a body of literary work compiled during the early centuries of the Christian era is known as the *Sangam* literature. For a discussion on this subject see, A. L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, (New York, 1954), pp. 461-62; N. Subrahmanian, *Sangam Polity* (New York, 1966), pp. 3-12; K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India*, pp. 110-11.

3 N. Subrahmanian, *Sangam Polity*, p. 272.

4 U. V. Swaminatha Iyer (ed.), *Purananuru*, fifth ed. (Madras, 1956), p. 339.

5 Ibid., pp. 316-17.

6 U. V. Swaminatha Iyer (ed.), *Cilappatikaram*, second ed. (Madras, 1960), p.418.

7 For a study of Tolkappiyar's classification of the early Tamil society see Tolkappiyar, *Tolkappiyam*, *Porulatikaram*, *Marabiyal*, Sutras, 612-28 (Madras, 1967), pp. 568-70.

8 N. Subrahmanian, *Sangam Polity* pp. 258-59.

status, while other non-Brahmans, though powerful in the predominantly agrarian economy like the Vellalas,[1] were given a lower status and were specifically referred to as Śūdras. Thus it would be more correct to assume that during the *Sangam* period social stratification in Tamil society was based on tribal or occupational distinction and not on the *varna* system introduced by the Aryans. But during the *Tolkappiyam* period,[2] the loosely defined tribal groups were stratifying themselves into a rigid caste system.

An important element that emerges from *Tolkappiyam* caste classification was the existence of antagonism between the Aryan Brahmans and the non-Brahman Vellalas. Vellala scholars think that this enmity might have originated in professional rivalry between Brahmans and Vellalas, for a sub-group of Vellalas performing religious rites and enjoying ritual leadership[3] lost their role with the advent of Brahmans into Tamil society. The fascinating ritual practices of Brahmans, their philosophy and metaphysics were far superior and interesting to the simple and unsophisticated rituals of tribal priests and therefore Brahman rituals became popular among local kings and nobles.[4] As a result of this, Brahmans slowly began to assume ritual leadership of Tamil society.

The assumption of ritual leadership in turn gave Brahmans the additional role of custodians of Sanskrit learning and Vedic religion.

---

[1] Vellalar: The name is derived from *Velanmai*, cultivation. Vellalas were the land-owning caste in the South and they were generally admitted to be the highest among non-Brahman castes in social scale. See Edgar Thurston, *Class and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. VII (Madras, 1909), pp. 361-88. For a study of the Vellalas in various Tamil districts see H. R. Pate, *Madras District Gazetteers: Tinnevelly*, Part I (Madras, 1917), pp. 138-42; F. R Hemingway, *Madras District Gazetteers: Tanjore*, Part I (Madras, 1906), pp. 81-82; F. J. Richards, *Madras District Gazetteers: Salem*, Part I (Madras, 1918), pp. 139-41; The *Census Reports* also discuss the customs and habits of the Vellalas. See the Census Report of 1901, pp. 183-84.

[2] Some scholars assign the fifth century A. D. as probable, while the traditionalists give a much anterior date. The internal evidence however shows that it was a later work. For a discussion on the age of Tolkappiyar, see S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, *History of the Tamil Language and Literature* (Madras, 1956), pp. 12-15; N. Subrahmanian, *Sangam Polity*, p. 29.

[3] P. Chidambaram Pillai, 'Saivite Mentality and Self-Respect', in *Revolt*, 8 May and 1 September 1929.

[4] N. Subrahmanian, *Sangam Polity*, pp. 369-70; P. Chidambaram Pillai, 'Saivite Mentality and Self-Respect', in *Revolt*, 8 May and 1 September 1929.

They jealously guarded this privileged position from outside interference by confining the mastery of the sacred texts to their own kind. Religion thus became the sole preoccupation of Brahmans. Yet this ritual leadership was not enough for securing a permanent place for themselves in Tamil society. Social mobility would have enabled non-Brahman castes to compete for higher ritual position in society. Non-Brahman priests might have tried to displace them from their high ritual position by their scholarship. In the first instance the spread of Buddhism and Jainism and later the *Bhakti* movement helped non-Brahman castes to share religious leadership with Brahmans.[1] In medieval times the Vīraśaivites, the Śaiva Siddhāntists and the southern school of Vaiṣhṇavites gave a fillip to this process.[2] Along with Sanskrit hymns, the Śaiva and Vaiṣhṇava hymns gained a place in temple worship. The ecstatic outpourings of the Vaiṣhṇava saint, Nammāḻvār (circa A. D. 10th century), came to be regarded as superior to the *Vedas* by the southern school of Vaiṣhṇavites. In the light of these one can postulate the view that there had been some competition from non-Brahman groups and this probably compelled Brahmans to find other means to ensure their leading position in society. They now realized the importance of the economic factor to strengthen their position.

As a result of their close association with kings of various dynasties as ritual heads and court officials, Brahmans acquired gifts of lands and land titles. These lands were called *Brahmadeya* lands. In some cases Brahmans purchased lands from land-owning classes for cash payments and these purchases won legal recognition. This did not suffice to consolidate their position. There arose a desire among Brahmans to live exclusively in separate

---

1 V. Subramaniam, 'Inter-Disciplinary Isolation in Universities' in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 4, No. 27, 5 July 1969, pp. 1071-72.

2 Virasaivism is noted rather for its cult and social doctrines than for its theology. It rejected the authority of the *Vedas* and the rituals of Brahmans and instituted complete equality among its followers. The Saiva Siddhantists and the southern school of Vaishnavites did not oppose Brahmans but challenged the language that they used for theological, metaphysical and religious discussions. The twelve basic sutras of Saiva Siddhanta metaphysics and its later literary works are in Tamil. The southern school of Vaishnavites showed a decided preference for the Tamil hymns sung by the Vaishnava saints as against the *Vedas*. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, *History of Tamil Language and Literature*, p. 129; A. L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, p. 333; K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India*, pp. 308-9, 416, 420.

Sabhas of their own. It is quite understandable that kings of Tamil land encouraged it and went to the extent of issuing edicts to this effect. For example, King Rajaraja in A. D. 1002 issued a general order to the effect that in Brahman villages, the estates of non-Brahmans be sold out, exception being made for servants holding land under some service tenure.[1] This general order was made ostensibly for easier administration but resulted in Brahman exclusiveness and economic supremacy. In subsequent years Brahmans emerged as a strong land-owning class comparable, in some measure, to the already existing land-owning group, the Vellalas. Land ownership was another factor which enhanced the position of Brahmans in South India. Technically, lands owned by Brahmans were very fertile and yielded more produce than those of other groups. Then again, most of the *Brahmadesas* were free of land tax and hence Brahmans had a further advantage over other agricultural classes in Tamilnad. Accumulation of wealth gave Brahmans a higher social status and greater social recognition.

The third factor that contributed to the rise of Brahmans in Tamil society was their tradition of learning. Learning of an institutional type emerged during the period of the Imperial Colas (A. D. 9-12 centuries) of South India. Such educational institutions were exclusively run for Brahmans to pursue studies in Vedic and Upanishadic literature. Liberal grants were given to them by the Cola kings, for the maintenance of institutions, staff and students.[2] Even after leaving these institutions Brahmans devoted their lives exclusively to intellectual pursuits. The Saiva *maths* did provide educational facilities for certain occupational groups like the Vellalas and the Muthaligals. But they could not continue this intellectual training because of other preoccupations. They had little scope for

---

1 K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Colas* (Madras. 1955), pp. 87, 578-79.

2 During the reigns of Rajendra I (1012-1044) and Rajadhiraja (1018-1054) Vedic institutions similar to modern centres of higher learning existed at Ennayiram in South Arcot and Tirubhuvani near Pondicherry, where respectively 340 and 260 students studied. There were 14 teachers in the former institution and 12 in the latter. Students were divided into junior and senior groups, and they studied the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* together with other disciplines associated with Sanskrit studies. Educational grants were given to the students, and the teachers were paid regular salaries in the form of substantial amounts of food grain. Gold coins were also given as allowances to certain categories of scholars and teachers at the Ennayiram Vedic College. All the expenses were met by the foundations instituted for this purpose by the kings. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Colas*, pp. 630-32.

utilizing even their acquired knowledge. As administration in those days was essentially field administration the education they received in the *maths* was of very little value. Education of an institutional type benefited Brahmans alone. Centres of learning for Brahmans continued to increase in number and size during the Vijayanagar Empire and the Nayak dynasties in fourteenth to sixteenth and sixteenth to eighteenth centuries respectively. Robert De Nobili's letter of November 1610 highlights this fact:

> In Madura there are more than ten thousand students, distributed in different classes of two to three hundred. These students are all Brahmans, for only they have the right to apply themselves to the acquisition of higher knowledge; the other castes, especially the Vaisyas and the Sudras are excluded from it. In order that the students may not be distracted by the necessity of providing for their maintenance, Bisnagar and the great Nayaka have made splendid foundations, whose revenues are sufficient for the remuneration of the masters and the subsistence of all the students.[1]

Educational institutions of this nature provided Brahmans with calm atmosphere essential to pursue their intellectual training.

This training paid them dividends as from the Vijayanagar period. It was then that they were preferred in greater numbers because of their literary accomplishments. Non-Brahman *Karnams* were displaced by Brahmans during the reign of Harihara I (A.D. 1336-1357).[2] The Nayak kings appointed Brahmans as their *Dalavays*, the principal officers of civil and military administration.[3] This enabled them to forge ahead of other non-Brahmans in becoming the elite of South Indian society.

In spite of being a minority group Brahmans retained their identity as a social entity because of their cohesiveness. The practice of endogamy ensured their distinctiveness as a social group. Western education also contributed to their exclusiveness. The nineteenth century Census of India attests to this fact. A survey of

---

1 R. Sathianathaier, *Tamilaham in the 17th Century* (Madras, 1956), p. 177.

2 K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India*, pp. 254, 256.

3 R. Sathyanatha Aiyer, *History of the Nayaks of Madura* (Madras, 1924), p. 237.

literacy of castes conducted in 1891 shows that 72.21 per cent of Brahmans were educated as against 27.22 per cent of Vellalas.[1] This gave Brahmans an advantage over other caste groups in establishing themselves firmly in the British administrative machinery. The arrival of the British in India opened up new opportunities in administration, law and commerce. And it is no surprise that the people who availed themselves of them were Brahmans. To cite an example from the Census of India 1911 under occupation by select castes, males and females, one finds that Brahmans outnumbered others in the ranks of the public and professional services.

1 *Census of India*, 1891 : *Madras*, Vol. XIII, (Madras, 1893), p. 179.

TABLE I

Occupation by select castes, males and females, 1911

	Public Administration				Arts and Professions like Lawyers, Doctors and Teachers		Contractors, Clerks, Cashiers, etc.	
	Gazetted Officers		Others					
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Brahman	22	—	4,701	—	5,452	89	1,577	5
Balija	—	—	967	—	492	48	633	87
Kaikolan	1	—	103	—	216	18	97	1
Kallan	—	—	508	—	200	14	299	30
Maravan	—	—	796	—	150	17	860	17
Shanan	—	—	66	—	108	15	280	26

Source : *Census of India*, 1911: *Madras*, Vol. XII, Part II (Madras, 1912), p. 270.

The above table indicates that Brahmans held nearly all the Gazetted positions in the provincial service, for 22 out of 23 went to them. In the non-Gazetted ranks also Brahmans showed a clear lead over other non-Brahman communities. If some of the communities held between them 2,440 non-Gazetted posts Brahmans held 4,701. In the professional services such as Medical, Legal and Educational Brahmans were even more successful, for in those services the former held 5,452 as against 1,166 positions held by the latter. There was no remarkable difference even in the less lucrative professions, although the number of Brahmans employed as contractors, clerks and cashiers was slightly less when compared to the positions they held during the same period in the provincial or professional services. Brahmans were able to enter government service because they already possessed experience in administration and law, entrepreneurship techniques and a good mastery of the alien language.

These abilities gave them opportunities to dominate public services and the learned professions as well as to enter into the political field. Many eminent lawyers, educationists, administrators and journalists, all of them Brahmans, formed associations such as the Madras Mahajana Sabha in the city of Madras in 1884. With the establishment of this premier political organization in the city it was only natural that the leading roles should be played by the Brahman educated elite. This trend was further evident when the Indian National Congress was inaugurated in 1885: to quote figures, five out of six delegates sent from Madras for the inauguration of the Congress were Brahmans,[1] and again when the Madras Pradesh Congress elected its representatives for the AICC, 14 out of 15 were Brahmans.[2]

When the Councils Act of 1892 was introduced, the provincial councils were enlarged and given powers to discuss the budget and other subjects related to it but not to vote on them. Another important change which followed in the wake of the Act was that the local bodies, universities and chambers of commerce were given powers to recommend non-official Indian members to the council.

1 C. Gopal Menon, 'Early days of the Madras Mahajana Sabha' in *Diamond Jubilee Souvenir: Madras Mahajana Sabha* (Madras, 1946), p. 58.

2 'The Non-Brahman Manifesto', in *Justice Party Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, 1968, (Madras, 1968), pp. 3-4.

This recommendation in course of time assumed the character of a local election. The Brahmans at this stage combined their ritual and political leadership with landownership most effectively, to get themselves elected to most of the local bodies. And representatives of the local bodies in the council were mostly Brahmans. Of the small number of Indian members of the council Brahmans were in a majority. Four out of six officials and 17 out of 29 non-officials, either nominated by government or elected by local bodies, were Brahmans.[1]

Brahman representation further increased with the introduction of the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909. Though representative government was introduced for the first time non-Brahmans derived no great benefit as qualifications laid down for elections were unfavourable to them. Non-Brahman property owners lacked education to understand the intricacies of representative government and consequently Brahmans continued to play a dominant role. Between the years 1910-19 out of nine Indian Officials who served on the councils, eight were Brahmans.[2] Likewise, nearly one fifth of the non-official members came from the same community.

Reasons for this extraordinary position have already been dealt with. Additional two reasons may be offered for the disproportionate representation of Brahmans in local political bodies. Firstly, their social cohesiveness as well as their sense of commitment as the leaders of society enabled them to dominate representative institutions. Secondly, the general apathy of non-Brahmans towards representative government accounted for the over-representation of Brahmans. There was inadequate non-Brahman representation both at provincial and central levels of government.

It was only in the 1920's that Brahman political dominance was challenged by non-Brahmans of South India as evidenced by the rise of the Justice Party in 1916.[3] The launching of the party marked the first step towards non-Brahman political participation, challenging Brahman supremacy. The activities of the Justice Party were confined largely to the educated non-Brahmans with the

---

1 S. Saraswathi, *Minorities in Madras State*, p. 59.

2 Ibid., p. 61.

3 For a study of the Justice Party see, Eugene F. Irschick, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India*: 1916-1929 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969).

result the bulk of non-Brahman masses remained untouched. There was hardly any political and social awakening among them. It was given to Naicker, when he entered the political arena in the 1920's to arouse non-Brahman masses and create in them an awareness of their dignity and their rightful place in society.

CHAPTER—II

NAICKER AND THE TAMILNAD CONGRESS

A STUDY OF THE SOCIAL CONFLICT BETWEEN BRAHMANS AND NON-BRAHMANS,

1920 – 1927

NAICKER AND THE TAMILNAD CONGRESS

The early life of Ramasami Naicker, though not as colourful as that of some leaders in public life of Tamil country, sheds light on the personality of the man, who considerably influenced the social and political life and thought of the Tamils, in the first half of the twentieth century. His uncompromising attitude towards the religious practices of the Hindus, their beliefs in the institutions of religion and the caste system can only be explained and understood in the light of the environment in which he grew up. For example his early experience of the rigidity of the caste system and the practices that went along with it created in him a feeling of revulsion against those who strove to uphold it as the core of the Hindu way of life. As a result of his contempt for the inequalities engendered by the caste system in society he spearheaded social reform in South India. His determination to remove the social imbalance was so strong that it influenced his whole thinking and to some extent clouded his political vision, especially when he concluded that Brahmans were the protagonists of the system of caste. His views on caste system were based entirely on his own understanding of the social and religious institutions of the Tamils. His zeal to remove the iniquities caused by caste, and the wide scope the Indian National Congress provided to further his aims were among the reasons that induced Naicker formally to enter the Tamilnad branch of the Indian National Congress in 1920.

Although Naicker's rise in the party hierarchy of the Madras Provincial Congress was rather meteoric, the reasons for this phenomenon cannot be fully assessed in the absence of party records. However an attempt has been made in this Chapter to show the groups from which he obtained his support and the regions from where he derived his strength, based on facts gathered from interviews and materials available. It also discusses Naicker's participation in the Vaikkom satyagraha, the Gurukulam controversy, the controversy over the resolution on communal representation at the Kāñchipuram conference and finally his dispute with Gandhi over the system of *varnashrama*

dharma. If Naicker's involvement in the Vaikkom satyagraha and the Gurukulam controversy to some extent exposed the opposition of orthodox elements to social reform, his own extremist views and attitudes on the question of communal representation were evident at the Kāñchipuram conference as well as in his reaction to Gandhi's interpretations of *varnashrama dharma*. These agitations and controversies helped to strengthen his view that social justice could not be achieved through the Indian National Congress, for its branch in Tamilnad attempted to compromise with the then existing social inequalities by upholding the concepts of purity and pollution which gave the Hindu caste system its distinctive character. This was borne in upon Naicker from the treatment meted out to non-Brahman delegates who attended the Congress sessions. At these sessions, it was alleged, that commensal restrictions were followed, and that Brahman delegates had their meals served in a separate enclosure near the kitchen. According to S. Ramanathan, a member of the Tamilnad Congress, this was an issue over which Brahmans and non-Brahmans were consistently at loggerheads,[1] and it has to be assumed that this influenced their thinking and blurred their vision whenever they met to discuss common issues at the Congress sessions.

This simmering state of communal animosity between Brahman and non-Brahman Congressmen came to a head at the time of the Gurukulam controversy in March 1925. This dispute split the Tamilnad Congress into two groups along communal lines, and this cleavage was followed by repercussions throughout the grass-root organizations in the Tamil districts and villages. The subsequent events at the Kāñchipuram conference in November 1925 and Gandhi's public addresses extolling the virtues of *varnashrama dharma* in September 1927 formalized the split. Soon after the Kāñchipuram conference those who has disagreed with the stand taken by the Tamilnad Congress Committee on the question of communal representation and Gandhi's views on *varnashrama dharma* started a new movement which came to be known as the Self-Respect movement.

---

[1] S. Ramanathan, 'Self-Respect Movement', in *Kuttuci Kurucami Ninaivu Malar* (Gurusami's Remembrance Day Souvenir) (Madras, 1966), p. 39.

Ramasami Naicker was born to non-Brahman parents of Balija Naidu community on 28th September 1879 at Erode in Coimbatore district. His father, Venkatappa Naicker, a leading businessman of the locality was a generous and religious minded person. His home was the meeting place of many men of letters, pundits and religious propagandists. The boy Ramasami did not have the benefit of this intellectual atmosphere, as he stayed with his adopted aunt, a widow, till he was eight years of age. She pampered him so much that his formal education was neglected, yet he developed a bold and enquiring mind, even to the extent of questioning his own family traditions and religious practices. Frequently he absented himself from school and spent most of his time in the company of Vāṇiya Chetti and Vēdagara boys,[1] who were regarded as low in the hierarchical system of caste, often violating the family custom by sharing their lowly fare.[2] He was taken to task by his parents for breaking caste rules and was told by them that caste Hindus had to observe commensal and other restrictions by not associating with people of low birth. The boy Ramasami seldom understood the logic of his parents' reasoning and thought that the dead weight of custom only divided the people in Tamil society. He therefore ignored their advice, absented himself from school, and spent most of his time in the company of friends of lower caste status. His parents were not only concerned with his stubbornness in flouting family customs, but also with his lack of education, and therefore they decided to bring him under their direct control. Accordingly he was brought back from his great aunt's home and later sent to an English primary school where he seems to have enjoyed himself in school-boy pranks, often at the expense of his teachers, and in teasing his class-mates. When complaints against his vexatious conduct became numerous, the boy Ramasami was withdrawn from the school at the age of ten to assist in his father's business, where he proved himself quite successful.[3]

---

1 Vaniya Chettis are oil-pressers. Vedagaras are those engaged in weaving mats, baskets and other household articles with bamboos and palmyra leaves.

2 *Navamani Annual*, Madras, 1937. See also Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar* (Ramasami Naicker: The leader of the Tamils) (Erode, 1958), p. 19.

3 Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, pp. 22-23.

Since Venkatappa Naicker was a commission agent dealing in seasonal crops like chilli, turmeric and cereals, the young Ramasami had plenty of leisure which he spent in the midst of orthodox pundits and religious propagandists listening to their many puranic stories. Through their religious discourses and discussions the young Ramasami learnt the rudiments of the philosophical significance of Hindu mythology and theology. Eventually he changed his role of a passive listener to that of an active interrogator, asking questions about inconsistencies and improbabilities in the *puranic* stories and ridiculing the basic concepts of Hindu religion and philosophy. Questions were often asked on the appropriateness of the institution of caste in society, belief in the theory of *karma* and the soundness of idol worship, but none of the pundits or religious leaders who came to his home seems to have given him convincing answers.

> I often questioned the sadhus, the pundits and the Brahman *purohitas*[1] who frequented our house, on various aspects of religion and philosophy. What I started at first as a means of relaxation later became a confirmed habit in me. The questions I put to them were usually controversial, impertinent and insinuating in nature. Therefore they refused to answer or answered unconvincingly, and this made me lose faith in God, religion, *shastras* and *puranas*.*[2]

Ramasami Naicker's opposition to Hindu orthodoxy and the caste system became more and more out-spoken in his later life, for many incidents and his own personal experience as a *sadhu* in the holy centres of India contributed to the hardening of this attitude. In 1904 he left his home after a quarrel with his father and became a religious mendicant visiting various pilgrim centres in the country. While at Banāras he learnt more about the iniquities of the institution of caste, witnessing the exploitation of the illiterate masses by crafty priests in the name of religion, and noticing the absence of morality.[3] Ramasami's

---

1 *Purohitas* are Brahman priests who help non-Brahmans to perform religious rites.

*Passages marked with an asterisk are translated from Tamil into English by the writer.

2 Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, p. 26.

3 Interview with Ramasami Naicker on 1 June 1969.

reaction to what he saw at Banāras has been graphically described by his biographer Sami Chidambaranar thus:

> Ramasami Naicker reached Kāśi (Banāras) penniless and therefore went from one choultry[1] to another where free food was offered. Everywhere he was refused food because he was a non-Brahman. At last he managed however to gain entrance into a choultry and here too he was thrown out after being recognized as a non-Brahman... Finally he decided to eat the remnants of food on the leaves.[2] .. He imagined Kāśi to be a place of immaculate purity devoid of all vices. It was here he witnessed that the Brahmans too ate meat and drank toddy, and that prostitution was a thriving institution.'[3]

The experiences at Banāras so disgusted him that he gave up his temporary life of a mendicant and returned home to assist in his father's trade once again.

Ramasami Naicker was not solely confined to his father's trade after his return from Banāras, because he was drawn into a series of public activities. The first occasion was an outbreak of plague in Erode, which occurred probably in 1915. He organized relief work with the help of his friends and distributed food and money to the distressed families. This activity revealed to the people of Erode that Naicker was a man with potential for leadership and that he could be entrusted with public responsibilities. As a result of this newly acquired image as a social worker and his own status as the son of a wealthy man of the locality, Naicker was invited to serve on various temple committees, offered positions in the local taluk board and finally elected as the chairman of Erode municipality. During his term of

---

1 Choultry is usually a large quadrangular building enclosing a spacious court, built by philanthropists near places of religious interest for visiting pilgrims to lodge in free of cost for a couple of days. Choultries also used to provide free board on certain festive occasions.

2 Certain types of leaves are used as plates to serve food. The chief among them are Plantain, Lotus, Mantarai and Banyan leaves. A single plantain leaf is usually cut into two or three pieces depending on the size of the leaf and each one of them will be used as a plate. One large lotus leaf is enough to serve food for an adult, whereas the mantarai and the banyan leaves are small and several leaves have to be stitched before they could be used.

3 Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, pp. 49-52.

office from 1917 to 1919 he executed the Cauvery water scheme which ensured a regular supply of drinking water for the citizens of Erode and earned their admiration.[1]

In 1915, when Ramasami Naicker entered active public life, the political campaign in the Presidency of Madras was gaining momentum. It was then that Mrs. Annie Besant began her campaign for Home Rule or Self-government for India, with a series of articles in her English daily *New India* during the months of March—April 1915. She declared that the time had arrived for India to be a 'sovereign nation within her own boundaries owing only allegiance to (the) Imperial Crown'.[2] Naicker took no part in the political agitation for Home Rule during this period, probably owing to his involvement in social activities and taluk board affairs in his home town. But apparently these duties did not prevent him from taking an interest in the political issues of the day, for we find him in May 1916 participating in a public meeting convened by the supporters of Annie Besant to protest against the action of the Government of Madras in levying security on her paper *New India.*[3] Naicker's participation in this single meeting in no way suggests that he subscribed to Annie Besant's concept of Home Rule or to her style of politics, because when she formally launched the Home Rule League on 1 September 1916, Naicker took no part in it.[4]

Ramasami Naicker's first direct contact with political figures in Tamilnad was probably made when the Madras Presidency Association (MPA) was founded on 20 September 1917. The non-Brahman members of the Tamilnad branch of the Congress formed this association to represent and safeguard their interests in the national organization and at the same time to repudiate the claims of the Justice Party to be the sole representative of the non-Brahman community in the presidency.[5] However, the immediate aim of the association at that time was to place before Edwin S. Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, a scheme of

---

1 Ibid., pp. 61-62.
2 B. S. Baliga, *Madras District Gazetteers: Coimbatore* (Madras, 1966), p. 113
3 *Hindu*, 1 June 1916.
4 Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, p. 70.
5 New India, 7 September 1917; T. V. Kalyanasundaranar, *Tiru. Vi. Ka. Valkkaikkurippukkal* (Autobiography of Kalyanasundaranar) Reprint (Madras, 1969). pp. 246 and 259.

reforms that would give non-Brahmans full communal representation in the legislatures.[1] A month earlier, on August 20 Montagu had declared his intention of heading a mission to India in order to assess the political situation at first hand, to make himself and his colleagues conversant with various group interests, and as far as possible to chalk out the principles of the proposed constitutional reforms. Naicker, who attended the inaugural meeting of the association, was in full agreement with its aims, and particularly its efforts to secure representation for non-Brahmans in public bodies, which efforts in his view were inspired by a desire for social justice. As this aim impressed him, Naicker took increasing interest in the activities of the associaation, served as one of its vice-presidents, participated in all its deliberations and helped to conduct its second annual conference at Erode in October 1919.[2]

As an active member of the MPA, Naicker became familiar with the programmes and policies of the Indian National Congress. Its plans for the liberation of the country appealed to him and especially its efforts to raise the condition of the masses and do away with untouchability and prohibition, impressed him. As the Congress held views similar to his on social reform, he thought that by joining the political organization he could bring about a new social order in the Presidency of Madras.[3] While he was still undecided whether or not to join the Congress two persons influenced him to come to a decision: One was C. Rajagopalachariar, popularly known as Rajaji, and the other was Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu, a Balija like himself. Both of them urged Naicker to join the Congress not merely to achieve political independence for the country but to fight the social inequalities prevalent in society. Ultimately on Rajaji's advice, Naicker decided to join the Congress towards the end of 1919.[4]

Rajaji's association with Naicker came about when the latter was the president of Erode municipality in 1915. During the same period Rajaji held a similar position in the neighbouring

---

[1] *New India*, 22 September 1917.

[2] T. V. Kalyanasundaranar, *Tiru. Vi. Ka. Valkkaikkurippukkal*, pp. 260-62.

[3] An Admirer, *Periyar E. V. Ramasami: A Pen Portrait* (Erode, 1962), pp. 17-18.

[4] Interview with Ramasami Naicker on 1 June 1969.

district of Salem, and this afforded him ample opportunities to come into personal contact with Naicker, and to get to know his family standing at Erode, his competency in handling public affairs and, above all, his personal popularity among the citizens of Erode. Likewise Naicker respected Rajaji as a man of keen intellect and non-sectarian views. This mutual regard flowered into a personal friendship which endured until Rajaji's death despite difference in their political approach.

What motivated Rajaji in bringing Naicker into the Congress fold? To answer this question, it is necessary to delve into the background of personal and ideological differences that existed within the Tamilnad Congress Committee (TNCC) during these years, with particular reference to Rajaji and the predominently Brahman leadership of the Madras Congress.

One can suggest a political motive, if one considers the political milieu of the presidency of Madras of this period. With the launching of the Justice Party, soon after the first indications of the impending constitutional changes, many non-Brahmans of standing flocked to its banner for it was pledged to promote the political aspirations of non-Brahman communities in the body-politic. More especially, talented non-Brahmans from middle class families saw, in the positive policies of the Justice Party and its manifest interest in collaborating with the ruling power, many opportunities which would secure them lasting personal gains. As against this the Madras Provincial Congress offered them only the prospects of a long struggle to achieve its goal of political freedom for the country, and for that it called on its members to make enormous personal sacrifices. Many educated and talented non-Brahmans were unwilling to make such sacrifices in the absence of immediate gains. Even those who were willing to join the Congress were sceptical of their own progress within the party hierarchy and in the body-politic, for they saw that the Congress organization in Madras was led and dominated by Brahmans despite non-Brahman[1] numerical majority. For these reasons, the Congress in Tamilnad as opposed to the Justice Party succeeded in attracting only a few non-Brahmans of calibre. In these circumstances

[1] 'The Non-Brahman Manifesto', *Justice Party Golden Jubilee Souvenir* (Madras, 1968), pp. 3-4.

it was but natural for Rajaji to consider Naicker as a potential member of the Congress, for he possessed both wealth and popularity. Moreover Rajaji must have anticipated that Naicker's entry would influence other Balijas, who were numerically large and commercially well placed in the Coimbatore district,[1] to enter the national movement and thereby stem the growing influence of the Justice Party in that district.

During this period the Tamilnad branch of the Congress, like any other political organization, had its own factions and interest groups, each led by a prominent member of the party. For want of materials we may not now be able to assess the causes that led to the emergence of groups within the Tamilnad Congress. Nor is it possible to evaluate whether these groups emerged due to personality conflicts or as a result of ideological or communal differences. Although these had their role within the Congress neither Brahmans nor non-Brahmans organized themselves solely on the basis of communal considerations into opposing groups except on the rare occasion of the Gurukulam controversy. Even during this controversy, which rocked the Tamilnad Congress in 1925, the non-Brahman group seems to have had the moral support of important Brahman leaders like S. Srinivasa Iyengar and others, as we shall see later in this chapter. Moreover the MPA, which was launched in 1917 by non-Brahmans to guard their interests in the Congress, was not anti-Brahman in character. On the contrary it was an organization which competed with the Justice Party in the struggle for influence among non-Brahmans in Tamilnad. Nevertheless some of the politicians of the older generation point out the existence of Brahman and non-Brahman factions within the Congress,[2] although their differences were not made public at this period. If one accepts this view as valid neither the Brahman nor the non-Brahman faction in the Tamilnad Congress was sufficiently homogeneous to function cohesively in all matters of political interest.

---

1 Balija Naidus are a wealthy community and they now own a number of textile mills in Coimbatore district. For details see James J. Berna, *Industrial Entrepreneurship in Madras* (London, 1960), pp. 43, 44.

2 Based on interviews I had with S. Ramanathan, Ramasami Naicker and K. Rajaram Naidu, one of the former presidents of the Tamilnad Congress Committee on 1 June, 14 November and 10 November 1969 respectively.

In 1920 the Brahmans in the Tamilnad branch of the Congress were divided into three groups under the leadership of Rajaji, Srinivasa Iyengar and S. Satyamurti. The first two were Śri-vaiṣhṇava Brahmans and the third was a Smartha Brahman. Rajaji,[1] who was to play a vital role in national politics, distinguished himself as an 'extremely successful lawyer' and an able president of the Salem municipality. In 1919 on the insistence of his friends, he left Salem to settle down in Madras in order to pursue his legal practice and to take a more active part in public life.[2] It was in the same year that Gandhi met Rajaji for the first time and it was here that Gandhi took the decision to call upon the country to observe a general *hartal* against the Rowlatt Act.[3] Rajaji not only subscribed to this novel political agitation but also subsequently emerged as the chief exponent of Gandhi's philosophy of non-co-operation as well as the promotor of constructive policies embodied in the *swadesi* movement.

Srinivasa Iyengar[4] (1874-1941) of Madurai was a man of different calibre and stature from Rajaji. Iyengar had already established himself as a brilliant lawyer and since 1916 he had been the advocate-general of the Government of Madras. He gave up this coveted position in 1920 as a protest against the repressive measures of the Government of India imposed in the wake of the Jalianwallah Bagh tragedy. In the subsequent year he not only surrendered the British award of C.I.E., but also resigned his membership from the Madras Legislative Council and there-

---

1 Some aspects of Rajaji's political career and his views on a wide range of subjects are brought out in Monica Felton's work, *I Meet Rajaji* (Bombay, 1962). Another interesting biography of Rajaji, by Nilkan A. Perumal, sheds some light on some of the political events in which Rajaji was involved upto the 1950's. See Nilkan A. Perumal, *Rajaji: A Biographical Study* (Calcutta, 1948). One other biography worth mentioning is Kalki's Tamil work, *Nattukku Oru Putalvar* (One Eminent Son of the Country) second ed. (Madras, 1956). Written by one of Rajaji's admirers, it gives some insight into his early political career.

2 Monica Felton, *I Meet Rajaji*, pp. 138-39.

3 M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments With Truth* second ed. (Ahmedabad, 1956), pp. 458-60.

4 A short biography of S. Srinivasa Iyengar written by his daughter S. Ambujaammal is available in Tamil. S. Ambujammal, *En Tantaiyar* (My Father) (Madras, 1963); K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar's work, *Srinivasa Iyengar: The Story of a Decade in Indian Politics* (Mangalore, 1939) gives in detail the political career of S. Srinivasa Iyengar upto the 1930's.

after actively participated in the national movement.[1] Despite all these actions he opposed Gandhi's style of politics, condemned his non-cooperation movement as 'unconstitutional'[2] and viewed the boycott of schools, colleges, law courts and legislatures as unnecessary sacrifices on the part of individuals, since they had little influence in changing British policy in India. He was also sceptical of the efficacy of pressurizing British economic interests through the promotion of *khaddar* in the country.[3] In his own personal life, Iyengar wore *khaddar*, gave up his titles and boycotted law-courts in conformity with Gandhi's dictates.[4] Nevertheless Gandhi's directions to boycott the legislatures were consistently flouted by Srinivasa Iyengar, and at the Calcutta Congress session in September 1920 he voted against the boycott resolution along with Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and Satyamurti. Ultimately, when the boycott resolution was passed at the Calcutta session, both A. Rangaswami Iyengar and Satyamurti agreed to abide by the Congress mandate and refrained from contesting the Madras Legislative Council elections of 1920. Srinivasa Iyengar contended that the resolution was not binding as far as he was concerned since he had voted against it.[5] Actually he successfully contested the Madras University seat in the legislative council in the elections of that year.[6] In his opposition to the council boycott he and Rajaji who was a supporter of the boycott, were on opposite sides. This is indicative of the political differences that existed within the Brahman group in the TNCC.

Satyamurti, who shared Srinivasa Iyengar's views, came from the princely state of Pudukottah in South India. Born in 1887, at Tirumayam, he had his undergraduate and legal education at Madras. Before he became active in the Tamilnad branch of the Congress, he had practised for some years as one of the junior lawyers of Srinivasa Iyengar. Satyamurti's ability as a forceful speaker

---

1 S. Ambujammal, *En Tantaiyar*, p. 46.

2 Ibid., p. 11.

3 Ibid., pp. 47-61.

4 Ibid., pp. 46-47.

5 *Mail* and *Swadesamitran*, 22, 23 September 1920.

6 S. Srinivasa Iyengar contested the Madras University Graduates Constituency and defeated his rival candidate by a margin of 1,694 votes. Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, Vol. XXVI (Return showing the results of elections in India, 1921), Cmd. 1261, p. 6.

gave him prominence in the provincial Congress and also won him an important place as the secretary to the Congress delegation that went before the Joint Select Committee in London in 1919.[1] From then onwards Satyamurti worked in close collaboration with Srinivasa Iyengar in his opposition to Gandhi's council boycott policy on the ground that the existence of a sectarian political party, the Justice Party, in the Presidency of Madras warranted co-operation rather than non-co-operation with the ruling forces. As a result of taking this stand, he voted against the boycott resolution passed at the Calcutta meeting along with Srinivasa Iyengar and Rangaswami Iyengar. Subsequently Satyamurti resigned his secretaryship of the Madras Pradesh Congress Committee, (MPCC), in September 1920.[2] It was because of this identity of views on the question of council entry that Satyamurti and Srinivasa Iyengar worked together to promote the political interests of the Swaraj Party in the Presidency of Madras especially after the Special Congress session held at Delhi in September 1923, where it was agreed that those who had no religious or other conscientious objections to entering legislatures were allowed to contest elections and still remain within the party. It was also agreed to suspend all propaganda against council entry.[3] Armed with this mandate of the National Congress both Iyengar and Satyamurti, under the aegis of the Swaraj Party, opposed the Justice Party at the 1926 elections for the provincial council and defeated it decisively, thus terminating the first six years of Justice Party rule in the Presidency of Madras.[4] In the process of establishing and consolidating the gains of the Swaraj Party in Madras both Satyamurti and Srinivasa Iyengar often met with stiff opposition from the 'no-changers' led by Rajaji, and this eliminated the possibility of united action within the provincial Congress to gain political advantage over the opposition parties including the truncated Justice Party. All these develop-

---

1 *Kalaikkalanciyam*, Vol. 4 (Madras, 1956) p. 409. See also Arun, *Anta Nalil* (In Those Days) second ed. (Madras, 1966), pp. 40-41.

2 V. K. Narasimhan, *Kasturi Ranga Iyengar*, pp. 190-91. First referred in Eugene F. Irschick's, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India*, p. 195. See also *Mail*, 20 October 1920; *Swadesamitran*, 21 October1920;Kalki, *Nattukku Oru Putalvar*, pp. 33-38.

3 *Mail*, 17 September 1923; *Hindu* and *Swadesamitran*, 18 September 1923.

4 For detailed results of the 1923 elections see Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, Vol. XVIII (Return showing the results of elections in India, 1924), Cmd. 2154, pp. 9-15.

ments point to the view that factionalism due to ideological differences among Brahman leaders existed within the Tamilnad branch of the Congress in the 1920's.

The existence of these ideological differences gradually crystallized into a power struggle in order to maintain a hold on the rank and file. The persons involved in the power struggle were drawn mostly from the Śrivaiṣhṇava sect of Brahmans, because it was this class of Brahman intellectuals who in the first instance came out in large numbers to serve and lead the provincial Congress at great personal sacrifice. On the other hand very few Smartha Brahmans of comparable stature were in the Congress, for its leaders such as V. Krishnaswamy Iyer, P. S. Sivaswamy Iyer, V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer and others were moderates[1] to whom Gandhi's political approach was not only unconstitutional but irrelevant in political circumstances of the time. The only Smartha Brahman who came into the limelight and held positions of importance in the provincial Congress was Satyamurti. But, as we have seen earlier, he was ideologically opposed to Rajaji and was therefore close to the faction led by Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and others. As a result the Tamilnad wing of the Congress was divided into two factions, one led by Rajaji and the other by Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, Srinivasa Iyengar and Satyamurti at different periods of time.[2] In the early twenties Kasturi Ranga Iyengar held the leadership of the group opposed to Rajaji, and was followed by Srinivasa Iyengar and Satyamurti in the later 1920's and 1930's respectively.

The root causes of the personality clashes which were to end up in bitter factional conflicts can be traced to the MPCC meeting held at Tinnevelly in June 1920. At this conference Rajaji succeeded in passing a resolution favouring non-co-operation as a tactical political weapon to fight the *Raj* in spite of opposition from S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and others.[3] This initial cleavage among the Śrivaiṣhṇava leaders deepened when Rajaji attempted to gather a following from among the provincial Congress members. His efforts to organize a following for non-co-operation became evident

---

1 S. Ramanathan, *Gandhi and the Youth* second ed. (Madras, 1947), pp. 2-3

2 Kalki, *Nattukku Oru Putalvar*, p. 38.

3 Ibid., pp. 8, 38, 40-41; *Mail* and *Swadesamitran*, 24 June 1920; *Hindu*, 25 June 1920.

at the time of the Calcutta Congress session in 1920. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was then president of the MPCC and Satyamurti was its secretary. In spite of their known stand on non-co-operation and their hold on the MPCC 161 out of 306 delegates from the Tamil districts voted in favour of the boycott resolution.[1] This was regarded as a motion of no confidence in Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's leadership, and therefore both he and Satyamurti relinquished their offices in the MPCC accusing Rajaji of promoting factionalism and of attempting to purge all those who had opposed the non-co-operation resolution.[2] Thereafter the rift between Rajaji and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar worsened resulting in a power struggle within the party. In 1921, when the MPCC was reorganized to include the representatives of all the Tamil districts, Rajaji successfully manoeuvered to install his men in the new committee and this sparked off a bitter controversy. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, Rangaswami Iyengar, Satyamurti and others jointly accused Rajaji of manipulating the elections for the newly organized committee with a view to gaining control of it and—thereby mustering support in the ranks of the party for non-co-operation.[3] Charges and counter charges of an acrimonious nature were made. The existence of this difference of opinion among the Śrivaiṣhṇavas, based on personal as well as ideological differences continued throughout the 1930's. In the 1930's the contest for leadership ceased to be a struggle among Śrivaiṣhṇava, for Rajaji's opponent was a Smartha Brahman, Satyamurti. But this feud cannot be considered as a fight between the Śrivaiṣhṇavas and Smarthas, but as personal strife with ideological overtones.

Although contests for power and position continued among the Śrivaiṣhṇavas, they had to count on the support of the numerically strong non-Brahman members who came from the Tamil districts. From the available materials the exact number of non-Brahmans who were on the MPCC cannot be given with certainty. If the TNCC meeting held at Trichinopoly in 1925, where Rajaji's resolution urging that the issue of commensal restrictions should be left to the

---

1 Eugene F. Irschick, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India*, p. 196. For full details of the proceedings of the meeting see also *Mail* and *Swadesamitran*, 5 to 9 September 1920.

2 *Swadesamitran*, 16 October 1920.

3 Ibid., 15, 16 July 1921; *Mail*, 15 July 1921; Kalki, *Nattukku Oru Putalvar* p.37.

authorities of Gurukulam was defeated, is any indication, then it can be assumed that non-Brahman representation was more than Brahmans. The role played by this numerically strong non-Brahmans in the politics of the country in the early 1920's may be analyzed to assess Naicker's rise at its true worth in the Congress hierarchy during this period. Was this non-Brahman group homogeneous and powerful, with proper leadership able to exert influence on the MPCC? Or was it an amorphous group divided and subdivided on ideological and sub-communal lines, and hence a weak and ineffective force within the Congress Party? Who were its leaders and what were their attitudes to the non-co-operation issue which divided the Śrivaishṇava Brahmans?

The initial efforts of the non-Brahmans to organize themselves into an articulate body within the Congress began with the foundation of the MPA on 20 September 1917.[1] This association existed only for two years, and like the Justice Party, it fought to obtain communal representation for non-Brahmans in the Madras Legislative Council. The main objective of the association was fulfilled by the Meston Award of 1920. The Award was named after Lord Meston, who came to Madras in February 1920 to arbitrate on the question of reservation of seats for non-Brahmans in the Madras Legislative Council. According to this award 28 seats, 3 urban and 25 rural, all in plural constituencies, were reserved for non-Brahmans.[2] After this award the non-Brahmans in the MPA had nothing else to fight for. Coupled with this, poor financial support, lack of enthusiasm on the part of their leaders and their preoccupation with activities other than those of the MPA, contributed to its inactivity, thus denying non-Brahmans any cohesiveness or unity of purpose with which to work within the Congress. Moreover informal agreement among non-Brahman leaders was not possible because of their highly independent and individualistic attitudes in assessing and evaluating political issues of the day. P. Kesava Pillai, MPA president, and one of the few-non-Brahman participants in the First National Congress held at Bombay in December 1885, and a member of the Indian Congress Committee

---

1 A brief discussion of the origins of the MPA and its two years of activities can be seen in T. V. Kalyanasundaranar, *Tiru. Vi. Ka. Valkkaikkurippukkal* (Autobiography of T. V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar) Vol.I. (Madras, 1969), pp.258-63.

2 Eugene F. Irschick, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India*, p. 165.

for 1901,[1] himself severed his connection with the Congress to join forces with the Justice Party. V. O. Chidambaram Pillai (1872-1936), a man of great repute in Congress circles for launching in 1906 the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company, the first indigenous company to ply merchant ships between Tuticorin and Ceylon, was not very active in the MPA owing to his personal commitments and his increasing interest in literary pursuits.[2] T. V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar (1883-1953) a Vellala Tamil scholar and one of the MPA secretaries, was engrossed in consolidating and strengthening the nascent labour movement, with which he was associated from its inception in Madras. He resigned his editorship of the MAP's Tamil daily, *Desabaktan*, in July 1920, thus terminating his participation in the activities of the association.[3] Another important non-Brahman leader in the Tamilnad branch of the Congress and the MPA was Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu (1887-1957), a Balija Naidu, from Salem district. He was a medical practitioner of indigenous medicine and had a thriving practice at Tiruppur in Coimbatore district before his arrest at Madurai in 1918. Until this year, as one of the elected secretaries of the MPA he toured the Tamil districts and popularized the aims of the association.[4] In this year he was involved in a strike at the Harvey Mills, Madurai and did not again participate in its formal activities. Originally J. N. Ramanathan led the strikers, on behalf of the Justice Party, but he was barred from giving any lead to them by a prohibitory order issued by the government which prevented him from making any speeches within a ten mile radius of Madurai for a period of one month. Varadarajulu Naidu, on behalf of the MPA, then stepped in and urged the strikers to continue their strike till their demands were met. This

---

1 Annie Besant, *How India Wrought for Freedom* (Madras, 1915), pp. 6, 330. See also B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I. (1885-1935) second reprint (Bombay, 1969), p. 110.

2 After his release from prison in December 1911, V. O. Chidambaram Pillai spent part of his time in literary activities, editing and writing critical notes and commentaries for Tamil classical and grammatical works. *Kalaikkalanciyam*, Vol. IV, pp. 661-63. For a short sketch of Pillai's life see M. P. Sivananam, *Kappalottiya Tamilan* (Madras, n.d.); and Arun, *Anta Nalil*, pp. 103-107.

3 T. V. Kalyanasundaranar, *Tiru. Vi. Ka. Valkkaikkurippukkal*, Vol. 1, pp. 260, 258-87.

4 Ibid., pp. 260-61. For a short sketch of Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu's life see, Sixtieth Birthday Celebrations Committee, *Life and Sketch of Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu* (Madras, 1947).

he did through his speeches in public meetings and his writings in his Tamil weekly *Prapanchamitran*. Neither the English management of Harvey Mills nor the Madras Government liked this new development. And when Naidu wrote an inflammatory article in his weekly Tamil newspaper about the strike the government considered the contents of his article seditious, cracked down on his press and finally charged him with treason. The case against him dragged on for four months, stirring great public antipathy towards government and exciting sympathy for Naidu. In spite of this show of public sympathy Naidu was sentenced to 18 months rigorous imprisonment in January 1919.[1] Subsequently on an appeal to the High Court the sentence was annulled and he was released from prison.[2] The Harvey Mills strike and the resultant court action consumed most of his time and he could not attend to the activities of the MPA. Even after his release he had no time for MPA activities, for he had to ensure the smooth running of his new Tamil weekly, *Tamil Nadu*, and be on the move from one place to another to propagate the principles of Gandhi's non-co-operation movement.

With the disintegration of the MPA as an organization for non-Brahmans within the Congress, they lost a common platform to meet and discuss exclusively their problems and to plan for concerted action. But in fact there were no specific issues or problems for them to deal with. The Meston Award secured for them reserved seats in the Madras Legislative Council. Non-Brahmans outside the Congress had an organization in the Justice Party, pledged to work exclusively for the benefit of non-Brahmans. Nevertheless the non-Brahmans in the Congress by virtue of their numerical strength could have dominated the Congress Working Committee in the province in the 1920's. But many of the popular non-Brahman leaders were not ambitious, and they do not seem to have felt any necessity either to de-Brahmanize Congress or to capture positions in it, probably because Congress organization had no administrative powers in the country to confer favours upon its members. Another probable reason for not attempting to supplant Brahman leadership was that it was in the hands of talented Brahmans

1 B. S. Baliga, *Madras District Gazetteers*: *Madurai* (Madras, 1960), p. 93. *Mail* and *Swadesamitran*. 15 and 16 January 1919.

2 Sixtieth Birthday Celebrations Committee, *Life and Sketch of Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu*, p. 2; Kalki, *Nattukku Oru Putalvar*, pp. 30-31.

who were themselves largely sympathetic to some of the reasonable claims of the non-Brahmans, including communal representation[1] as far as it did not contravene the basic tenets of the Congress. Many among them supported the formation of the MPA and also participated in the meetings it organized. On 14 January 1919, a day before Varadarajulu Naidu's conviction for his role in the Harvey Mills' labour trouble, a public meeting was convened under the auspices of the MPA in order to urge the government to withdraw its case against Naidu and to release him from prison. This meeting was presided over by A. Rangaswamy Iyengar, then the editor of the Tamil daily, *Swadesamitran*, and addressed by S. Satyamurti, T. V. Venkatarama Iyer and others, all of whom were members of the MPCC.[2] In addition to such moral support to the MPA, Rajaji and Dr. T. S. S. Rajan, a minister in the first Congress Ministry in 1937, were on the board of directors of the MPA's Tamil daily, *Desabaktan* and ensured its continued publication.[3] Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's English daily, the *Hindu*, also welcomed the formation of the MPA as an organization for non-Brahmans within the Congress to counter the activities of the Justice Party.[4] For all these reasons the Justicites denounced the MPA as a puppet of the Madras Brahmans, organized and financed by them to counter the legitimate claims of the Justice Party to represent all non-Brahman communities in the province.[5]

Yet another reason for non-Brahmans working amicably under Brahman leadership was the cordiality that existed between some of the Brahman and the non-Brahman leaders. Varadarajulu Naidu maintained close relationships with Rajaji, Rangaswamy Iyengar, Satyamurti and Venkatarama Ayyar, and later with Srinivasa Iyengar. The euphoria of sympathy and support Naidu had from his Brahman friends at the time of the Madurai trials is indicative of the warmth of feeling that existed among some of the

1 Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and Rajaji were largely sympathetic to non-Brahmans' claims for communal representation. Eugene F. Irschick, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India*, pp. 69, 162, 168; *Hindu*, 24 November 1925.

2 B. S. Baliga, *Madras District Gazetteers*: *Madurai*, p. 93.

3 T. V. Kalyanasundaranar, *Tiru. Vi. Ka. Valkkaikkurippukkal*, p. 267.

4 *Hindu*, 24 December 1917, First referred in Eugene F. Irschick's, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India*, p. 61.

5 *Dravidan*, 18 and 21 September 1917.

leading Brahmans and non-Brahmans in the Tamilnad Congress. Rajaji was his chief defence counsel while Rajan and others raised funds for him to fight the case.[1] Kalyanasundara Mudaliar was another non-Brahman leader who enjoyed the confidence of his Brahman colleagues in the Congress.[2] Mudaliar's preface to Rajaji's Tamil book *Socrates* exemplifies the cordiality of the relationship that existed between them.[3] Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was a source of strength to Mudaliar in his efforts to build up a strong labour movement in Madras. He gave wide publicity to its activities in the columns of the *Hindu*. Later, Iyengar himself was interested in labour union activities, and when the Madras Police Union was successfully formed he agreed to the request of Mudaliar to be its first president.[4] Mudaliar enjoyed the confidence and personal friendship of both Rangaswamy Iyengar and Srinivasa Iyengar despite ideological differences, for Mudaliar was an ardent advocate of council boycott.

Many non-Brahmans besides Varadarajulu Naidu and Kalyanasundara Mudaliar were opposed to council entry. Chidambaram Pillai, though an intimate friend of Rangaswami Iyengar, was in favour of council boycott. Other prominent non-Brahmans, such as Athinarayana Chettiar, Dhandapani Pillai and T. V. Gopalaswami Mudaliar, members of the MPA, were in agreement with Gandhi's ideas on non-co-operation. Younger members like S. Ramanathan were in the forefront of council boycott.[5] Nevertheless there were other non-Brahmans of stature who had faith in constitutional changes, which they considered would bring about gradual political evolution in the country. They also believed that constitutional changes would usher in an era of devolution of power from the hands of the British to the natives. This they considered would be in the best interests of the backward non-Brahman communities. Such

---

1 B. S. Baliga, *Madras District Gazetteers: Madurai*, p. 93; Sixtieth Birthday Celebrations Committee, *Life and Sketch of Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu*, p. 2.

2 The cordiality that existed between T. V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar and some of the Brahman leaders in the Tamilnad branch of the Congress such as Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, Rajaji, Satyamurti and Rangaswami Iyengar can be seen from the writings about them in Kalyanasundara Mudaliar's autobiography. T. V. Kalyanasundaranar, *Tiru. Vi. Ka. Valkkaikkurippukkal*, pp. 416-30; 438-443.

3 Ibid., p. 426.

4 Ibid., pp. 438-39.

5 S. Ramanathan, *Gandhi and the Youth*, pp. 8-9.

persons were moderates by conviction and were in some respects rather suspicious of Brahman eagerness for Home Rule. On more than one occasion they expressed concern about Brahman intentions on the question of reservation of seats for non-Brahmans in the legislative council. Kesava Pillai, V. Chakkarai Chettiar, who was an Indian Christian as well as a member of the MPA and others belonged to this category.[2] By virtue of the fact that both R. K. Shanmugam Chettiar, the first finance minister of independent India, and Dr. P. Subbarayan stood for elections at a later date, it can be assumed that they too opposed council boycott. Kesava Pillai, Shanmugam Chettiar and Subbarayan were elected to the Madras Legislative Council from Anantapur, Nilgris, and South Central landholders constituencies in the first elections to the provincial legislative councils held in November - December 1920.[1] Despite this the then popular non-Brahman leaders like Varadarajulu Naidu, Kalyanasundara Mudaliar, and Gopalaswami Mudaliar, the initiator of the MPA, were strong advocates of non-co-operation.

Dearth of material makes it difficult to identify the Congress non-Brahmans who were opposed to the non-co-operation concept. Nevertheless if one considers the stiff opposition that the boycott resolution met from the Tamil members of the Madras delegation at the Calcutta meeting of the Congress in 1920, one should assume that a good number of non-Brahmans, especially ambitious young men of calibre like Shanmugam Chettiar, would have supported council entry. Despite this the then popular non-Brahmans, with the exception of Kesava Pillai, remained strong advocates of non-co-operation.

When ideological conflict was at its height among the Śrivaiṣhṇavas in the Tamilnad wing of the Congress, it can be surmised that leaders like Varadarajulu Naidu, Kalyanasundara Mudaliar and others would have supported Rajaji's stand. Nevertheless, it is difficult to say whether they would have been a party to the group politics initiated by Rajaji because, firstly, both Naidu and Mudaliar were difficult persons to influence and, secondly, they had little

---

1 Eugene F. Irschick, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India*, pp. 68-69; 163.

2 Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, Vol. XXVI (Return showing the results of elections in India, 1921), Cmd. 1261, pp. 4-6.

personal ambition to indulge in factional politics in the party but tended to support issues on their intrinsic merits. Their individuality in taking decisions and abiding by them can best be illustrated by two instances. In 1920 Kalyanasundara Mudaliar resigned as the editor of *Desabaktan*, despite Rajaji's persuasions, because of differences of opinion with the board of directors over questions relating to the organization of the British India Press in which *Desabaktan* was printed.[1] Secondly, in 1925 when the Gurukulam issue was corroding Brahman and non-Brahman relationships in the Congress, there is evidence that Rajaji tried his best to influence Naidu on the question of inter-dining in the Gurukulam and failed. As we have seen earlier, both Naidu and Mudaliar maintained the best of relationships with the leading Śrivaishṇava Brahmans, including Rajaji. It is therefore most unlikely that they would have sided with Rajaji to force out Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's faction from the MPCC soon after the 1920 Calcutta Congress session. But those who had identified themselves with Rajaji's group like Ramanathan and his colleagues in the Youth League, would have stood by Rajaji in his struggle for power.[2]

Perhaps this might be one of the reasons that prompted Rajaji to look for a person among non-Brahmans who would make a potential leader of the calibre of Naidu and Mudaliar, but who at the same time would be more amenable and loyal to him. The choice at that time might have fallen on Ramasami Naicker, because Rajaji had the opportunity to know him better when they worked together as directors of the MPA newspaper, *Desabaktan*. Even before this, Rajaji had been impressed by Naicker's ability to organize and lead people from his activities in the local bodies in his home town and his performance as chairman of the reception committee of the second MPA conference held at Erode in 1918. As a result Rajaji had several times invited Naicker to join the Tamilnad wing of the Congress in order to strengthen its constructive programmes, which included the amelioration of the under-privileged communities.

---

1 T. V. Kalyanasundaranar, *Tiru. Vi. Ka. Valkkaikkurippukkal*, pp. 285-86.

2 One of K. Rajaram Naidu's contentions in favour of the inclusion of S. Ramanathan in the first Congress ministry despite his known radicalism was that he had proved himself in the early 1920's as a trusted follower of Rajaji. Interview with K. Rajaram Naidu on 10 November 1969.

Towards the beginning of 1919 Naicker made his final decision to join the Tamilnad branch of the Congress, although he formally became a member only in early 1920.[1] During the interim period between 1919 and 1920 he was by no means inactive in politics. He utilized this period to build up his image in Congress circles as a forceful speaker and one of the chief exponents of Gandhian political concepts in the Tamil districts. It was during this time that Gandhi asked the people of India to observe 6 April 1919 as a day of Satyagraha 'with prayers and fasting and taking the pledge of civil disobedience',[2] in order to vindicate the self-respect of the Indian people in the face of the coercive Rowlatt Act which had been placed on the statute book on 1 March 1919. In response to his call numerous public meetings were held in different parts of the country, and in Tamilnad Naicker helped to convene several meetings in all the district centres. In his speeches he explained to the audience the significance of Gandhi's call to the nation and exhorted them that the time had arrived to liberate the country from foreign rule. His public speeches were made in colloquial Tamil, enriched with wit and sarcasm and with pithy sayings and homely proverbs. He cared little for the niceties of language or for its artistic usage. In spite of his inadequate education, he succeeded in handling the Tamil language with great facility and forthrightness, so as to rouse the political consciousness of illiterate masses.[3] 'The Britishers', he harangued an audience in one of the districts, 'love to repeat that we Indians are brutes. May be you are and I am too. And it is up to us to demonstrate to them that we are brutish enough to drive them out to wrest our national freedom'.[4]

Once Naicker formally joined the Madras Pradesh Congress in 1920, he 'fanatically' supported Gandhi's agitational techniques[5] and aligned himself with the group led by Rajaji. At the same time

---

[1] Interview with Ramasami Naicker on 1 June 1969. See also Periyar, 'Enatu Kolkai Ataravu Marrattirku Karanam' (Reasons for my policy change), in *Tantai Periyar 90-vatu Antu Piranta Nal Malar* (Periyar's 90th Birthday Commemoration Souvenir) (Madras, 1968), p. 23.

[2] India: Director, Publications Division, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XV (New Delhi, 1965), p. vi.

[3] K. M. Balasubramaniam, *Periyar E. V. Ramasami* (Erode, 1947), pp. 37 and 39.

[4] An Admirer, *Periyar E. V. Ramasami: A Pen Portrait*, pp. 17-18.

[5] T. S. S. Rajan, *Ninaivu Alaikal*, p. 210.

Naicker maintained a good relationship with the leading non-Brahman members of the party, for they too were Gandhian in political outlook. Therefore he found little difficulty in collaborating with Varadarajulu Naidu or Kalyanasundara Mudaliar on all important political issues. Along with these two leaders, Naicker addressed many public meetings and soon earned a name for himself as one of the four top-ranking speakers in Tamil—others were Kalyanasundara Mudaliar, Satyamurti and Varadarajulu Naidu—capable of attracting large gatherings for their meetings.[1] Naicker had also a following of his own among the younger non-Brahman members of the Congress, particularly the members of the Youth League led by Ramanathan. Rajaji's support and the popularity he enjoyed among non-Brahman members, together with his increasing role in the subsequent non-co-operation movement, in the temperance campaign, and in the campaign launched to replace foreign cloth by the progressive use of *khaddar* helped Naicker rise quickly in the MPCC hierarchy, for in 1920 itself he was elected president.[2]

As president of the Tamilnad branch of the Congress, Naicker's influence among both Brahmans and non-Brahmans grew. His popularity and influence further increased among both groups when Gandhi launched his campaign of non-violent non-co-operation, after obtaining a mandate from the specially convened Congress session in Calcutta on 4 September 1920. To Naicker the campaign was of special significance for it sought to put the country on the road to *Swarajya*. His position as president of the MPCC increased his responsibility to work for the success of the non-co-operation campaign and therefore it was well planned and conducted with the support of all his colleagues. As the campaign meant the boycott of law courts, the centres of learning, the civil, judicial and other professional services, it involved some personal sacrifices on the part of the campaigners. Naicker did not spare himself in his adherence to non-co-operation. At the height of the campaign he was faced with the problem whether or not to collect some surety bonds and documents in his name worth fifteen thousand rupees from the court. Aware of his predicament C. Vijayaraghavachariar, a leading lawyer of Salem and the president of the Nagpur session of

---

1 T. V. Kalyanasundaranar, *Tiru. Vi. Ka. Valkkaikkurippukkal*, pp. 430, 433.

2 An Admirer, *Periyar E. V. Ramasami: A Pen Portrait*, p. 19.

the Indian National Congress in 1920, suggested that the entire amount could be made over to him so that he could add it to the Tilak Fund, then being raised. Naicker saw the point in Iyengar's suggestion but he was unwilling to compromise his understanding of the principles of non-co-operation, for the sake of any cause, however worthy it might be. Therefore he decided against collecting the bonds and thus forfeited the entire amount.[1]

Naicker's determination to suffer even personal loss for the sake of principles once again came to the fore at the time of the temperance campaign. When the campaign was started in 1921, he organized picketing before arrack and toddy shops. In August of the same year, when the campaign was intensified, his wife and sister were also drawn into it, to make it a success at Erode.[2] Many Congressmen to prevent the tapping of toddy cut the spathes from their coconut and palmyra trees. Naicker, who had over one thousand trees on his estate instead of cutting the spathes felled the trees themselves and thereby suffered a permanent loss of income.[3] Although this was an act done on a sudden impulse, his example was emulated by other Congressmen and as a result of their activities and from the impact of the campaign itself, the government incurred considerable loss of revenue, for the sale of toddy fell by 30 per cent.[4] In November 1921, in order to quell the agitation, the government imprisoned Naicker and other campaigners for over a month under section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

After his release from prison on 13 January 1922, Naicker, on the mandate of the All India Congress Committee, organized a successful hartal at Erode in connection with the visit of the Prince of Wales to India. For the next two years till March 1924, he was in the forefront of the campaign to popularize *khaddar*. He was

---

1 An Admirer, *Periyar E. V. Ramasami: A Pen Portrait*, pp. 20-21; Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, pp. 74-75.

2 K. M. Balasubramaniam writes in his book *Periyar E. V. Ramasami*, that these two were the first Indian women in the South to defy the government prohibitory orders against picketing before liquor shops and to court arrest. Their role in the temperance campaign was commented upon by no less a person than Gandhi himself. See K. M. Balasubramaniam, *Periyar E. V. Ramasami* (Erode, 1947), p. 21.

3 An Admirer, *Periyar E. V. Ramasami: A Pen Portrait*, p. 20.

4 B. S. Baliga, *Madras District Gazetteers: Coimbatore* (Madras, 1966), p. 116.

elected president of the Tamilnad branch of the All India Spinners Association, an organization launched to control the retail price and push up the sale of *khaddar*. Naicker thought that by urging the people to use cloth made of *khaddar* or handspun and handwoven material, he could not merely give a fillip to cottage industries in the country but could also enforce sanctions, however small they might be, against British economic interests by boycotting their textiles.[1]

For four years after joining the Congress Naicker held important positions in the regional organization. Although his election as president of the MPCC in late 1920 may largely be attributed to the support he received from Rajaji and his followers, the subsequent positions he held must have been attained by his proven abilities to agitate, to organize and to suffer personal loss. Perhaps this was one of the compelling factors that enabled him to get himself elected for the second consecutive year as secretary of the TNCC at the Tiruppur session of the Congress in April 1922. This was indeed a rare honour to be won by a non-Brahman Congressmen during this period.[2]

Such an honour would not have been possible for Naicker but for the popular support he enjoyed from among all sections of Congress members. Non-Brahman leaders generally supported him whenever the cause for which he was fighting was reasonable. Naicker gained the support of Brahmans partly by allying himself with Rajaji's group and partly by his skill in organizing and his capacity to make sacrifices for the national cause. Respect and understanding also existed between some of the Brahman leaders and Naicker till March 1924, because up to this period there were very few issues on which he differed from them. But this situation slowly changed with Naicker's participation in various campaigns, beginning from April 1924. In these campaigns he began to challenge the orthodox Brahman views on the caste system and the stand taken by some Brahman leaders on issues which, he considered, helped the Brahman community to enjoy certain privileges both in social and political life. None would have disagreed, including the progressive Brahmans, with Naicker's stand on these issues at this period but for the manner in which he launched his campaigns,

---

1 K. M. Balasubramaniam, *Periyar Ramasami*, p. 21; Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, p. 71.

2 B. S. Baliga, *Madras District Gazetteers: Coimbatore*, p. 117.

caring little for the susceptibilities of Brahmans in general. This tended to nourish communal conflict in society.

The first of such campaigns in which Naicker participated was the agitation at Vaikkom, in the princely state of Travancore, in April 1924. His involvement in it became for the first time a test of his ability to fight social inequalities without unduly affecting the sensitivity of the groups directly or indirectly involved. The agitation stemmed from an incident that took place between some Brahmans and Madhavan, a lawyer of a lower social status, of the Ezhava community. Madhavan came to attend the court in connection with a client's case. The court was located inside the compound of the Maharaja's palace. Within the same compound at that time a religious function in honour of the Maharaja's birthday was in progress. Therefore the orthodox Brahmans, fearing pollution even from the mere approach of a low-caste Hindu, forbade his entry. This incident was made into an issue by the local leaders of the Ezhava community, with the support of T. K. Madhavan, a fellow Ezhava and the Editor of *Deshabhimani*, George Joseph, a prominent Kerala Congress leader, and K. P. Kesava Menon, the Editor of *Mathrubhumi*. To protest against such inequalities in society they agreed to start an agitation at Vaikkom, the citadel of orthodoxy, over the right of untouchables to use the roads around the temple. Their decision to take out a procession of untouchables on a prohibited road was conveyed to Gandhi on 12 March 1924.[1] He gave his support to the satyagraha and advised them to conduct it without resorting to violence.[2] Having obtained Gandhi's approval the leaders launched the satyagraha on 31 March. No sooner did the agitation start than the state authorities rounded up and put into prison all the nineteen prominent leaders who were involved in the campaign, including Kesava Menon and Madhavan, the Editor of *Deshabhimani*, and George Joseph. The arrested leaders realized that in the absence of proper leadership, their satyagraha would fail; so they appealed to the Congress leaders in the neighbouring Presidency of Madras to come to their assistance.[3] In the meantime George Joseph and

---

1 India, Director, Publications Division; *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXIII (Delhi, 1967), p. 272.

2 *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 272-73.

3 Periyar E. V. Ramasami, *Tintamaiyai Olittatu Yar?*, p. 22.

Kesava Menon wrote a personal letter to Naicker, who was then president of the TNCC, requesting him to take over the leadership of the satyagraha.[1]

Ramasami Naicker accepted their offer and on 13 April arrived at Vaikkom where he started his agitation against social injustice. His speeches were highly emotional and provocative, as can be seen from the following passage.

> They argue that pollution would result if we untouchables passed through the streets leading to the temple. I ask them whether the Lord of Vaikkom or the so-called orthodox Brahmans would be polluted by the presence of untouchables. If they say that the presiding deity at the Vaikkom temple would be polluted, then that could not be God, but a mere stone fit only to wash dirty linen with.[2]

Such provocative speeches attacking orthodox religion were probably unheard of at that time in that locality and his public meetings attracted thousands of people. As a result the demand for opening all public roads to all citizens irrespective of caste gained popular support. But the Travancore State authorities were shocked at Naicker's polemical speeches particularly directed against the Brahmans, and feared that they would lead to communal disharmony. Within six days of his arrival at Vaikkom he was arrested and sentenced to a month's imprisonment. On his release from the Arivikkuthu jail, a warrant was served on him to leave the state immediately. But he chose to defy the warrant till his mission was completed. He pushed on with the agitation still more vigorously, and this gained him six months of rigorous imprisonment, but he was released two months earlier on the announcement of the Maharaja's death.[3] After his release he did not resume the agitation immediately, but returned to his home town, Erode. On his arrival, the Government of Madras arrested him for an anti-govern-

---

1 Ibid, p. 22. In a letter written to the author in January 1970, Nilakandan Nampudri disputed Naicker's claim.

2 Periyar E. V. Ramasami, *Tintamaiyai Olittatu Yar?*, p. 30. Indian *dhobis* (washermen) beat the clothes which they wash on flat stones, in order to help remove the dirt.

3 Ibid., pp. 25 and 28-29; Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, pp. 83-84; An Admirer, *Periyar E. V. Ramasami: A Pen Portrait*, pp. 21-23; K. M. Balasubramaniam, *Periyar E. V. Ramasami*, pp. 21-22.

ment speech he had made at the height of the *khaddar* campaign early that year. He was arrested on 11 September 1924 and probably released within six months, because he was in Travancore when Gandhi met the Maharani in March 1925.[1]

In the meantime, the satyagraha campaign received much popular support from several parts of Travancore as well as from all over the country. While the state authorities were much concerned with the problem of law and order, the Maharani was anxious to find a solution to the communal issue and thus bring about the cessation of the satyagraha. Then the Brahman Dewan of the state wrote a letter to Rajaji, the confidant of Gandhi in the South, appraising him of the Maharani's wish to meet Gandhi and discuss matters relating to the satyagraha in order to arrive at an amicable settlement.[2] On Rajaji's suggestion Gandhi went to Vaikkcm and met the Maharani on 12 March 1925[3] in order to end the satyagraha peacefully. Apparently the meeting failed to resolve the issue, for the satyagraha continued until the prohibitory order was revoked in October 1927 and the roads were thrown open by the Travancore Durbar to the untouchables.[4]

The satyagraha provided Naicker with the opportunity to demonstrate his capacity to fight for social justice on behalf of the untouchables in Kerala. For his role in it he was lionized as *Vaikkom Virar*, the hero of Vaikkom, by the Tamil speaking population of the Presidency of Madras.[5] The TNCC, which met at Kanchipuram late in 1925, also placed on record a resolution appreciating the 'good work rendered by E. V. Ramas(w)ami Naicker and other satyagrahis which contributed not a little to the success of the Satyagraha campaign in Vaikkom.'[6] Despite these approbations and despite Naicker's ability to continue the satyagraha successfully in the absence of local leaders, the satyagraha itself exposed Naicker's lack of refinement in handling the masses.

---

1 Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, p. 85; Periyar E. V. Ramasami, *Tintamaiyai Olittatu Yar*?, p. 30.

2 Ibid., pp. 29-30.

3 *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXVI (Delhi, 1967), p. 293.

4 Ibid., Vol. XXXV (New Delhi, 1969), p. 116.

5 An Admirer, *Periyar E. V. Ramasami: A Pen Portrait*, p. 24; K. M. Balasubramaniam, *Periyar E. V. Ramasami*, p. 21.

6 *Hindu*, 23 November 1925.

Further it indicated the orthodox Brahmans' stubborn opposition to the liberalization of social customs[1] which Naicker viewed as a proof of their interest in perpetuating social inequalities based on birth. Further he suspected that the Dewan's letter to Rajaji was mainly intended to prevent the Maharani from coming to an agreement with the local leaders to suspend the satyagraha. Naicker alleged that the aim of the Dewan and Rajaji in inviting Gandhi to mediate, was to deny the credit for the successful conclusion of the satyagraha to the local leaders and to protect some of the interests of the resident orthodox Brahmans at Vaikkom. Source materials pertaining to this allegation are not available other than Ramasami Naicker's own version.[2] Even if Naicker's allegations were true there were sufficient reasons for the Dewan to invite Gandhi to mediate because the satyagraha was conducted mostly by the members of the Kerala Congress Committee and the TNCC with the approval and moral support of Gandhi. Since he was the leader of the Indian National Congress, the Dewan might have thought that Gandhi would be the suitable person to talk to the Head of the State.

Ramasami Naicker's belief in the orthodox Brahmans' rigid opposition to changing social customs was further strengthened when he was drawn into the Gurukulam controversy. This arose over the question of a commensal restriction that was imposed on the non-Brahman students at a centre of traditional learning called the Gurukulam of Sermadevi. V. V. S. Iyer, a well-known nationalist, started the school in December 1922 at Kallidaikkurchi, but later he shifted it to Sermadevi. Both were strongholds in Tinnevelly of Brahman cultural tradition and learning. The institution was established with the object of imparting religious education to youths, inculcating in them the spirit of

---

1 For example the *Hindu* reported on 11 March 1925 that Gandhi's talk with the orthodox leaders had ended in failure. It said, 'Mr. Gandhi met by invitation the local orthodox caste Hindu oppositionist leaders at the residence of Indanthurithi Nambyathiri .. He discussed with them for over three hours and made certain practical proposals with a view to bringing the struggle to a speedy termination. These alternative proposals were an arbitration, a referendum, an examination by select pundits of the *Sankara Smritis*. The oppositionists did not choose to accept any of these'. Quoted in *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXVI (Delhi, 1967), p.261.

2 Periyar E. V. Ramasami, *Tintamaiyai Olittatu Yar?*, pp. 29-30.

patriotism and infusing into them a passion for social service.[1] As a result of the declared objectives and of Iyer's own image both as a militant nationalist and as the editor of a popular Tamil newspaper the *Desabaktan*, the Gurukulam received for its upkeep donations from all communities, private individuals and institutions. Iyer's co-worker, Mahadeva Iyer, also raised a sum of twenty thousand rupees from the Nāṭṭukōṭṭai Chettiars in Malaya.[2] The TNCC on its part had agreed to donate a sum of ten thousand from its National Education Fund and paid five thousand rupees as its initial contribution.[3]

In January 1925 Ramasami Naicker received complaints from the students of the Gurukulam, including one from the son of O. P. Ramaswami Reddiar, a former Chief Minister of Madras, that separate dining was enforced for Brahman and non-Brahman students. It was further stated that the quality of the food served to the two sections of the students was different.[4] The complaint was brought to the notice of the president and the members of the TNCC, and a committee consisting of some of the members of the Tamilnad Congress was set up to investigate the allegations. The committee learnt that Iyer himself had given permission to two Brahman boys to dine separately in another place, on the insistence of their parents.[5] There was a storm of protest from the non-Brahman members of the Congress as well as from those who had donated liberally for the establishment of the institution. The non-Brahmans in the Congress unanimously took the view that this was most unexpected of such a liberal minded Brahman as V.V.S. Iyer and declared that his action was more than a compromise with the orthodox elements

---

1 The aims and objectives for which the Sermadevi Gurukulam stood can be had from Yogi Sri Suddhananta Bharati's Tamil work, *Viravilakku Va. Ve. Cu. Iyer* (The Life and Services of V. V. S. Iyer) (Tiruchirapalli, 1947), pp. 104-29; T. S. S. Rajan, *Va. Ve. Cu. Iyar* (Biography of V. V. S. Iyer), (Madras, 1946), p. 52; An Admirer, *Periyar E. V. Ramasami: A Pen Portrait*, p. 28.

2 T. S. S. Rajan, *Va. Ve. Cu. Iyar*, p. 52.

3 Periyar E. V. Ramasami, *Tintamaiyai Olittatu Yar?*, p. 34.

4 An Admirer, *Periyar E. V. Ramasami: A Pen Portrait*, p. 28; Periyar E. V. Ramasami, *Tintamaiyai Olittatu Yar?*, p. 34.

5 S. Ramanathan, 'Periyar Iyakkam' (Ramasami Naicker's Movement), in *Periyar's 89th Birthday Commemoration Souvenir* (Madras, 1967), p. 65; Suddhananta Bharati, *Viravilakku Va. Ve. Cu. Iyer*, p. 190.

of the locality. One writer in *Tamil Nadu* commented that the Gurukulam incident merely proved the opinion existing in some quarters that non-Brahmans could not expect any social justice even at the hands of such liberal minded Brahmans as V. V. S. Iyer.[1] Whereupon Iyer came out with a statement that in future the scholars admitted into the Gurukulam would not be 'granted exemption from the general mess rules'.[2] His statement did not convince non-Brahman members of the TNCC, and they took up the matter with Gandhi when he was in Madras in 1925.[3] The persons concerned with the Gurukulam controversy met Gandhi. Iyer's supporters pointed out that inter-dining was not in practice either in society or in educational institutions run by the government. So they maintained that in the absence of such a custom in society it would be unwise to insist that the Gurukulam alone should enforce inter-dining among its students. Those who were opposed to this view contended that nearly ninety five percent of the entire contributions for the establishment and maintenance of this institution[4] came from non-Brahmans on the distinct understanding that it would train youths on non-sectarian lines for national and social service. But since Iyer had acted against that understanding and was running the institution on communal lines, either he should return all the donations received from the TNCC and from non-Brahmans or he should agree to change the character of the institution forthwith. Gandhi advised that the two Brahman students should be allowed to dine separately, as it had been agreed to already, but in future no such restrictions should be encouraged or imposed in the Gurukulam.[5]

---

1 *Tamil Nadu*, 28 February 1925.

2 *Hindu*, 15 April 1925.

3 T. V. Kalyanasundaranar, *Tiru. Vi. Ka. Valkkaikkurippukkal*, p. 775.

4 *Hindu*, 27 April 1925.

5 *Navasakti*, 27 February and 6 March 1925. See also Gandhi's letter to Varadarajulu Naidu dated 10 March 1925 in which he said: 'it seems to me that in so far as the present Brahmacharis are concerned, if the parents of the Brahmin boys insist on their boys being allowed to dine separately, their scruples should be respected. But, for the future, it may be announced that no Brahmacharis would be accepted whose parents would not let their boys dine in the same row with the others. I understand from you that the cook at the Gurukulam would always be a Brahmin. What you object to (and that probably) is the separating of non-Brahmin boys from the Brahmins. I do think that all the boys should sit in the same row whilst they are taking their meals'! *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXVI, p. 260.

Apparently the meeting with Gandhi failed to satisfy the parties concerned. Iyer's supporters, like Rajan, K. Santhanam and others did not like the idea of inter-dining to be introduced at this stage in the Gurukulam, and so they said that any 'unrestricted promiscuity as demanded would prove highly sacrilegious and would particularly hurt the feelings of the highly religious Brahman leaders'.[1] Ramasami Naicker and Varadarajulu Naidu gave vent to their feelings against the Gurukulam and what they considered to be Brahman dominance in Tamil society through the columns of their Tamil papers *Kudi Arasu* and *Tamil Nadu* respectively. Naidu for example in the March 1925 issue of *Tamil Nadu* expressed the prevalent opinion among a section of leading non-Brahmans in the following manner:

> The meeting on Tuesday last with Mr. Ayyar and others in the presence of the Mahatma has demonstrated that, just as it is impossible for us to prevent our being disgraced by the Whites till we attain Swaraj, it is impossible to prevent our being disgraced by the Brahmans till unity is attained among the Tamils.. If Mr. Ayyar does not return, before the end of April, the sum of Rupees five thousand which was granted by the Tamilnad Congress Committee and other sums which the Tamils want to be refunded, a Satyagraha will be started in the month of May for taking possession of the property of the Gurukula[2]

To prepare the masses for his proposed campaign to wrest control of the property of Gurukulam, Naidu commenced his tour of Tamilnad in the first week of April. In his speeches he never failed to drive home to his audience that while the major share of the contributions came to the institution from non-Brahmans, their sons received unfair treatment at the Gurukulam. The immediate question of inter-dining was for him just a symptom of the larger problem of social injustice, which was not conducive to the ideal of Indian nationalism:

1 An Admirer, *Periyar E. V. Ramasami: A Pen Portrait*, p 29.
2 *Tamil Nadu*, 29 March 1925, *Ms. NNR*. 1925.

> The Gurukulam must stand for an ideal—for Indian nationalism—and there should be no invidious distinction between man and man.. (I have) no objection to Varnashramites having their own Gurukulam for safeguarding the interests of the Varnashrama section of the Hindus. But what V. V. S. Iyyar did in (the) Gurukulam was not only a breach of conduct but he was attempting to bring up the non-Brahmin children in an atmosphere of inferiority.[1]

He also maintained that before Tamils sought freedom from the foreign yoke they must strive to attain complete equality with the Brahmans in the matter of inter-dining.[2]

Although Ramasami Naicker and Varadarajulu Naidu had differences of opinion on various political questions, they held identical views on the Gurukulam issue. Naicker's speech made at Salem in April 1925 confirms this view. It was at this meeting that he said for the first time that the 'Brahmin question' should be settled 'even while the British supremacy lasted in the country; otherwise they would have to suffer under the tyranny of Brahmanocracy'.[3] Despite this he did not come out openly in support of Naidu till a misunderstanding arose over the balance of payment of five thousand rupees due to the Gurukulam. In his capacity as the secretary of the Tamilnad Congress, Naicker refused to pay the sum unless the common mess as demanded by the non-Brahman community was conceded. Iyer, however, managed to obtain a cheque for the amount[4] without the knowledge of Naicker from the joint-secretary, who happened to be a Brahman. Ramasami Naicker was infuriated over this incident and said that the time had come to declare an 'all-out war' on the Gurukulam. Thereafter he addressed numerous public meetings in various parts of Tamilnad in which he brought home to the public the caste discrimination practised by the institution and

1 *Hindu*, 20 April 1925.

2 Ibid., 20 April 1925.

3 *Hindu*, 14 April 1925.

4 This was, perhaps, the first cheque since Naicker became the secretary of the TNCC to be issued without his signature. *Hindu*, 30 April 1925. An Admirer, *Periyar E. V. Ramasami: A Pen Portrait*, pp. 29-30.

appealed to non-Brahman benefactors to withhold further financial support. He also stopped the amount that had been collected for the institution in Malaya from the Chettiar community and thus he was responsible for applying economic sanctions against the Gurukulam.

At the height of this controversy, T. V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar, who was considered by his contemporaries to be a more balanced person than either Naidu or Naicker,[1] appealed to Iyer to change the character of the institution, so that it could retain the goodwill of all the communities. Through the columns of *Navasakti*, Mudaliar suggested to Iyer that if the present location of the Gurukulam had restrained him from running it on non-sectarian lines, it could be transferred from Sermadevi to another centre.[2] To this Iyer not merely turned a deaf ear but also criticized him for lending support to a malicious campaign in Tamilnad.[3] As a result the only popular non-Brahman Congress leader who could have bridged the gulf between the Brahman and the non-Brahman groups in the TNCC was also alienated. On 21 April 1925 Iyer resigned as the head of the institution, and in his letter of resignation he criticized Mudaliar for imputing unworthy motives to him for making some useful suggestions.[4] Some of the enlightened leaders among the Brahmans neither disapproved publicly of the sectarian lines on which the institution was run nor attempted to take any positive steps to compose the differences between the two groups in the Tamilnad Congress.

Since the Tamilnad Congress had given liberal financial support to the Gurukulam, there were some efforts to settle the issue of inter-dining at the TNCC annual meeting scheduled to

---

1 T. P. Meenakshisundaran, 'Tiru. T. V. K.: The Living', in *Tamil Culture*, Vol. VII (Madras, 1958), pp. 17-18.

2 Iyer himself had confessed earlier that in spite of his reservations he had to permit the two Brahman boys to eat separately because of the Brahman centre in which the institution was located. See T. V. Kalyanasundaranar, *Tiru. Vi. Ka. Valkkaikkurippukkal*, p. 775; T. S. S. Rajan, *Va. Ve. Cu. Iyer*, p.53.

3 *Navasakti*, 3 April 1925.

4 Iyer, in his letter of resignation said: 'Even such a usually fair-minded opponent as *Navasakti* charges me with attempting to twist Mahatma's words to suit my purpose. I have only to acknowledge with grief that the poison of communal hate has entered deep into the heart of an important section of Tamil political society'. *Hindu*, 21 April 1925.

be held at Trichinopoly in April 1925. Some voiced their opposition to this proposal, for they held the view that the TNCC had no jurisdiction over matters concerning a private institution. Nonetheless Varadarajulu Naidu not only succeeded in raising the Gurukulam issue at the meeting on 29 April but also exercised his influence as president of the TNCC to limit the agenda specifically to a discussion of the question of inter-dining. The proceedings of that meeting reveal the existence of three different points of view within the TNCC. Varadarajulu Naidu, Ramasami Naicker and others totally opposed the practice of commensal restrictions at an institute supported by the regional Congress and insisted that either the character of the institution should be changed forthwith or it should return the donations obtained from the TNCC, Rajaji and others, though personally against commensal restrictions, contended that the time was not ripe to impose their views on the institution and it should be allowed to solve the sensitive problem of inter-dining without outside intervention. The third group, led by Srinivasa Iyengar, Kalyanasundara Mudaliar and others, felt that organizations receiving support from the Congress should strictly conform to their non-sectarian policy. These three views became explicit from the resolutions moved by Varadarajulu Naidu and others. At the conclusion of his presidential address Varadarajulu Naidu moved a resolution which expressed the regret of the TNCC at having paid five thousand rupees to the Gurukulam.[1] To this Natesan Chetti moved an amendment which sought to replace the phrase, 'this Committee regrets having paid a grant of Rs. 5000/-' by 'this Committee resolves to recover the five thousand rupees'. Both the resolution and the amendment were discussed at length but failed to get the approval of the committee. At this stage Rajaji said that since inter-dining was not practised in Tamil society it should be left alone to be solved by the passage of time.[2] Then he moved a resolution which said that the internal management of the Gurukulam should be left to the people who run it, but that the pupils of the institution should dine

1 Ibid., 30 April 1925.

2 Ibid., 30 April 1925.

together without discrimination.[1] This resolution was supported only by four of the committee members and was therefore not approved. The rejection of these two resolutions indicates that the majority of both Brahman and non-Brahman members were unwilling to support the stand taken by either of the two groups, for they were not helpful in finding a solution. Finally S.Ramanathan moved a resolution, which the committee later approved, recommending that gradations of merit based on birth should not be observed by any organization participating in the national movement and appointing V. Thiyagaraja Chettiar of Devakottah, Ramanathan and Ramasami Naicker to help the Gurukulam implement this principle.[2]

The number of votes Ramanathan's resolution obtained indicate two interesting factors. Although, subsequently after

---

[1] Rajaji's Resolution: 'The Tamilnad Congress Committee deprecates public interference in the details of the internal management of institutions like the Shermadevi Gurukula and is of opinion that those in charge of such institutions should be left free to tackle prevailing prejudices and practices interfering with national unity and progress according to their own judgement with reference to the difficulties and circumstances of each case. In view, however, of the agitation started, the Tamilnad Congress Committee advises the authorities of the Shermadevi Gurukula that all pupils in the Gurukula should dine together without distinction'. *Hindu*, 30 April 1925.

[2] Ramanathan's Resolution: 'This Committee is of the opinion that the gradations of merit based on birth should not be observed in Indian Social life and recommends that this principle to be practised in all organizations partaking in the National movement. This Committee appoints Messrs V. Thiyagaraja Chettiar of Devakottah, S. Ramanathan and E. V. Ramasami Naicker to help in practice of this principle at the Sermadevi Gurukula.' *Hindu*, 30 April 1925. Some of the liberal non-Brahman members of the Committee, such as Kalyanasundara Mudaliar and R. K. Shanmugam Chettiar, supported the resolution on principles of their own which found clear expression in their statements. 'The controversy would have never assumed serious proportions', observed Kalyanasundara Mudaliar, 'if only V. V. S. Iyer had accepted the award of Gandhi in its entirety'. Shanmugam Chettiar, who himself donated Rs. 3000 as a first instalment to the Gurukulam, in supporting the resolution urged others to lend their support if they respected the Congress principle of working for the removal of untouchability and invisibility from the Tamil society. But those who voted against the resolution, such as M. K. Acharya and T. S. S. Rajan, objected that interdining should not be enforced on those who could not follow the practice on their own accepted principles. For example Rajan said: 'Mr. V. V. S. Iyer might have committed himself to certain principles with the donors, but so far as the Congress Committee was concerned, they would not insist on interdining. No understanding was to his knowledge ever given to the Committee and no promise of any kind was demanded. There was interdining for the first three or four months but later changed .. Iyer had to respect the scruples of those who could not inter-dine'. *Hindu*, 1 May 1925.

this meeting the TNCC split on communal lines, at the time of voting on Ramanathan's resolution a large majority of the committee members were not influenced by communal considerations but exercised their votes on the merits of the issue. Srinivasa Iyengar and his Brahman friends seem to have given their moral support to Naidu and Naicker's stand.[1] This implies that the Brahman members of the TNCC were divided while the non-Brahmans for the first time and without exception took an unanimous stand. Otherwise Ramanathan's resolution would not have had an easy passage at the committee stage. Nineteen members voted for it and seven against. Except for Srinivasa Iyengar and some of his friends, almost all the leading Brahmans, including Rajaji, Rajan, Vijayaraghavachariar, K. Santhanam, Dr. Swaminatha Sastri and N. S. Varadachari, opposed the resolution.[2] They thought that to make political capital out of the internal matters of an institution would be inappropriate. Their stand was taken advantage of by Ramaswami Naicker's group to put forward the view that Brahmans, whether tradionalists or progressives, were essentially communal in outlook. As if to give credence to their charge, some among them who had opposed the resolution, without feeling the pulse of the committee, moved a censure motion against Varadarajulu Naidu, condemning him for endangering national unity by promoting communal ill-feeling in Tamil society, While there was some truth in their claim, such a resolution was untimely. Though it was rejected, the resolution in itself only helped to widen the split within the Tamilnad congress.[3]

Soon after the meeting, Varadarajulu Naidu and Ramasami Naicker, probably stung by the censure motion, vowed to achieve complete victory in the campaign against the Gurukulam. Naidu declared that the 'Gurukulam is going to be the deciding factor in the national life of the non-Brahmins . .they would no longer accept a position of inferiority in the national institutions'. He

---

1 Sixtieth Birthday Celebrations Committee, *Life and Sketch of Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu*, p. 4.

2 S. Ramanathan 'Periyar Iyakkam' in *Periyar's 89th Birthday Commemoration Souvenir*, p. 66; Interview with Ramasami Naicker on 1 June 1969.

3 An Admirer, *Periyar E. V. Ramasami: A Pen Portrait*, p. 31; K. M. Balasubramaniam, *Periyar E. V. Ramasami*, p. 22; S. Ramanathan, 'Periyar Iyakkam' in *Periyar's 89th Birthday Commemoration Souvenir*, p. 66.

uttered veiled threats of further, more serious anti-Brahman agitation if the campaign were unsuccessful. 'If I win, it would be a glory to both Brahmins and non-Brahmins, but, if I fail, the consequences would be disastrous to Brahmins'.[1] Some of the Brahman members were equally vehement when they questioned the competence of the TNCC to interfere in the internal affairs of the Gurukulam and also made a counter-charge that both Ramasami Naicker and Varadarajulu Naidu were responsible for stirring up communal feelings in Tamil society. Some non-Brahman members also criticised them for the same reasons. One of the younger members of the TNCC, M. Bhaktavatsalam, while criticizing Naidu for making an issue out of the Gurukulam controversy, said that "while Mahatma Gandhi wanted this year to be a 'spinning year' Dr. Naidu is making it a 'non-Brahman year'".[2] Charges and counter-charges continued for some time and finally those who had opposed Ramanathan's resolution tendered their resignations from the TNCC and appealed to the AICC to intervene on their behalf. The latter refused to intervene, but confirmed the decision taken by the local Committee and advised the dissident group to join the ranks of the Congress in Tamilnad, ignoring the ill-will generated over the Gurukulam affair.[3]

As dictated by the TNCC resolution, Ramasami Naicker and Ramanathan visited the Gurukulam to urge its authorities to dispense with commensal restrictions. They failed in their mission. Finally Kavyakanta Ganapathi Sastri, an enlightened Brahman, and V. S. Shanmugam Chettiar, a member of the TNCC, took upon themselves the task of making a reconciliation between the authorities of the Gurukulam and the group led by Naidu and Naicker.[4] But before a settlement could be reached, V. V. S. Iyer died on 3 June 1925, at the Papanasam falls in

---

1 *Hindu*, 4 May 1925.

2 M. Bhaktavatsalam's letter dated 18 April 1925 published in the *Hindu* on 21 April 1925. This quotation was first used by Eugene F. Irschick in his work *Politics and Social Conflict in South India*, p. 271.

3 S. Ramanathan: 'Periyar Iyakkam', in *Periyar's 89th Birthday Commemoration Souvenir*, p. 66.

4 *Hindu*, 25 May 1925; Yogi Sri Suddhananta Bharati, *Viravilakku Va. Ve. Cu. Iyer*, p. 196.

Tinnevelly district.[1] The Gurukulam continued to function for some time without changing its mess-rules under the principalship of T. R. Mahadeva Iyer, who succeeded V. V. S. Iyer. In August 1927, Gandhi advised Mahadeva Iyer to hand over the properties of the institution to a committee consisting of the chief donors, if he could not run it on the lines suggested by the members of the committee.[2] Although Mahadeva Iyer's reaction to this suggestion is not known the institution ceased to function after 1927.

Before the communal animosity aroused over the Gurukulam controversy could subside the TNCC met again at Kāñchipuram on 21 November 1925, to consider council entry, which was a question hotly debated by all political parties of the day. This evoked keen interest in the Tamilnad Congress circles because of the peculiar political situation that obtained in the Presidency of Madras. The Justice Party, the chief rival of the Congress in the presidency, had contested the two elections that came in the wake of the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms and had ruled the presidency since 1920. From then onwards it used its vantage position as the ruling party to promote the interest of the non-Brahman communities in the presidency, to de-Brahmanise the administration in stages and to enact legislative measures which sought indirectly to curtail the interests of the Brahmans. Some of the leading members of the Brahman community, who were themselves members of the Swaraj Party, thought that in order to contain the activities of the Justice Party and to spread the views of the Congress, the Tamilnad Congress should decide on the question of council entry before the 1926 elections.

Naicker's main object in participating in the Kāñchipuram conference was to get a mandate from the Tamilnad Congress on the question of communal representation. This body had accepted the demand for communal representation 'in principle' but refused on several occasions to let it take a 'statutory shape'.[3] Ramasami Naicker saw in this a subtle political move on the part of vested interests. Since 1920, he had made it a point to

1 *Hindu*, 6 June 1925.

2 *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXXIV (New Delhi, 1969), pp. 307, 389 and 425.

3 An Admirer, *Periyar E. V. Ramasami: A Pen Portrait*, p. 33.

bring up the question of communal representation at every conference of the TNCC. At the Tinnevelly conference in 1920, Naicker had moved a resolution that a certain percentage of seats to be decided later, should be reserved for non-Brahman communities in the legislature and in the public services. When this was taken up for discussion its sponsor was the 'object of some of the bitterest attacks'.[1] Nevertheless the resolution which had been adopted by the Subjects Committee with a majority of six votes,[2] was eventually turned down in the final stages by the chairman of the conference, Srinivasa Iyengar, who characterized the resolution as one 'detrimental to (the) national unity'.[3] In 1921 Rajagopalachariar had given tacit approval for the resolution but had pleaded with Naicker not to make an issue of it in the larger interests of national unity. At the Tiruppur conference in 1922, when the resolution came up for discussion, the debates were marred by personal attacks by extremists from both Brahman and non-Brahman groups. The following year at Salem Naicker did not press this issue, on the advice of Varadarajulu Naidu and George Joseph. Although Naicker had been president of the conference at Tiruvannamalai in 1924, he was not even then able to get a majority for his resolution because of Srinivasa Iyengar, who is said to have undermined his efforts.[4] Bearing all these failures in mind, a few weeks prior to the Kāñchipuram conference Naicker had stressed in *Kudi Arasu* that since the AICC at the Patna session in September 1925 had given a mandate to the Swaraj Party to carry on the work inside the central legislative and provincial councils on behalf of the Congress,[5] the TNCC should decide on giving statutory status to the principle of proportional representation at its forthcoming meeting. Otherwise the interests of non-Brahmans would be at stake in the ensuing elections.[6] Further he had warned the representa-

---

1 Ibid., p. 33.

2 Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, p. 92.

3 An Admirer, *Periyar E. V. Ramasami: A Pen Portrait*, p. 33; Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, p. 92.

4 Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, p. 53.

5 B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I. (1885-1935), second reprint (Delhi, 1969), pp. 288-89.

6 *Kudi Arasu*, 3 November 1925.

tives attending the conference to be careful about the Brahman declarations of national unity and Swaraj[1] and to take a firm stand on the question of proportional representation, because the TNCC would take a decision on the Patna resolution. As expected by him the resolution came up for discussion. Then Srinivasa Iyengar expressed his view that the TNCC could recommend to the Cawnpore session of the AICC the adoption of the Patna resolution as well as the Swaraj Party programme of council entry by the Indian National Congress. These proposals were then put in the form of a resolution by Iyengar. When this resolution[2] was taken up for discussion Ramanathan, a supporter of Ramasami Naicker, insisted that the allied question of communal representation should also be discussed at the same time. Thereupon the committee considered the resolution put up by Ramasami Naicker demanding proportional representation on the basis of population strength for the non-Brahman communities.[3] There was a debate on this question and both the Brahmans and Ramasami Naicker's followers were the targets of bitter attacks.

---

1 Ramasami Naicker attacked the Brahmans in the TNCC on the eve of the Kanchipuram conference in the following manner: 'No one will deny that it is these persons that destroyed the movement for liberation based on non-violence started by the Mahatma, from its very birth by various machinations. Hence measures should be devised for preventing the movement which is started by us for the advancement of our country .. from falling into the hands of the treacherous and selfish class of persons who deceive the public by their machinations, entangle them in their wily snares and turn everything to their advantage by standing in the forefront in every matter. If we do not devise such measures, any kind of movement which may be started for our liberation, any sacrifice which we may make and any hardship which we may experience in consequence will, in addition to proving fruitless, be utilised for reducing our condition still further. Hence, we sound a note of warning that the popular representatives who are going to meet at Kanchipuram should not be caught in the machinations of this class of persons once more, with the object of securing Swaraj or national advancement, and should not continue to act according to the wishes of the latter with the idea that the latter are acting in their interests.' *Kudi Arasu*, 3 November 1925; *Ms. NNR*. 1925.

2 S. Srinivasa Iyengar's resolution : (A) 'This conference recommends to the Cawnpore Congress to adopt the resolution passed by the All India Congress Committee at Patna with the modification that khaddar should always be worn by Congressmen. (B) This Conference also recommends to the Cawnpore Congress that the Congress should conduct political work more vigorously than the Swarajya Party had hitherto done and should also carry on the campaign of capturing the Councils and that the existence of the Swarajya Party as a separate party is unnecessary in future'. *Hindu*, 23 November 1925.

3 For a detailed report see the proceedings of the Subjects Committee published in the *Hindu*, dated 23 November 1925.

But the resolution itself failed to gain support from the members of the subjects committee, who rejected part 'A' of the resolution but adopted part 'B' in a modified form.[1] According to this the committee recommended 'when the Congress adopts the programme of the Swaraj Party and undertakes the elections of next year, a Selection Committee would be constituted to see that the interests of non-Brahmins are safeguarded in the nomination of candidates'.[2]

Despite this conciliatory move on the part of the Subjects Committee Ramasami Naicker was disappointed with the decision taken. He therefore informed the committee that he would again bring up both parts of the resolution at the main session of the conference itself. It was then suggested by Kalyanasundara Mudaliar, in his capacity as president of the conference, that Naicker might do so, provided part 'A' of his resolution won the support of 25 delegates. In the meantime Srinivasa Iyengar had withdrawn his resolution, and as it was this that motivated Naicker to urge his policy of communal representation, it was expected that in the light of this new development he would not make an issue of it. Nevertheless Naicker decided to stick to his decision and moved the resolution in its original form at the main session of the conference.[3]

Kalyanasundara Mudaliar promptly ruled the resolution out of order on technical grounds, In rejecting it he said that while Srinivasa Iyengar's resolutions, which urged the Congress to contest the forthcoming elections, were being discussed, Naicker's resolution had been considered in the subjects committee. The committee then rejected part 'A' of the resolution but adopted part

---

1 The resolution framed by Ramasami Naicker and moved by Ramanathan: Part A: 'This Conference resolves that as it is necessary for the advancement of the country that there should be more of mutual trust and less of bitterness between several communities among Hindus, there should be representation in Legislative Council and other bodies according to the population strength of Brahmins, non-Brahmins and Depressed-Classes. Part B: That this Conference, having regard to the need for unity and welfare of different communities, urges the desirability of constituting a Selection Committee for nominating candidates for the elections in this Presidency next year after the Cawnpore Congress had decided to run the elections themselves'. *Hindu*, 23 November 1925.

2 *Hindu*, 23 November 1925.

3 *Navasakti*, 27 November and 18 December 1925.

'B' with slight modifications. In the meantime, Srinivasa Iyengar himself had withdrawn his resolution for lack of support and so the TNCC reaffirmed its policy of boycotting the Legislative Councils in the coming elections. Since the Tamilnad Congress had rejected the very idea of council entry, Mudaliar declared that it would be inconsistent to allow Naicker's resolution, which sought to safeguard the interests of non-Brahmans in the selection of candidates in the 1926 elections, to go before this conference. In his opinion the proper place for the resolution might be at the conference of the Swaraj Party, which alone had obtained the mandate from the AICC for council entry. Not convinced by this explanation, Naicker staged a walk-out with his followers. charging Kalyanasundara Mudaliar with taking an arbitrary decision on an important resolution in alliance with vested interests.[1]

The proceedings of the subjects committee and the general session of the conference indicate that non-Brahmans, in contrast to the Gurukulam issue, were divided on the question of proportional representation. One is inclined to believe that a number of prominent non-Brahmans, including Varadarajulu Naidu, Kalyanasundara Mudaliar, Shanmugham Chettiar and others, were not in favour of Naicker's resolution, especially when the TNCC decided against contesting the ensuing elections. This in no way indicates that all those non-Brahmans who had opposed his resolution were against the principle enshrined in it. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar was totally against communal representation, for he feared that this would perpetuate sub-communal politics in the country. Varadarajulu Naidu was lukewarm in his support. S. Singaravelu Chettiar and T. P. Krishnaswamy Pavalar desdained to support Naicker's stand on the question of communal representation. Shanmugam Chettiar and other like-minded non-Brahmans favcured giving some guarantee to all communities so that they could participate in the activities of the Congress wholeheartedly. Nevertheless they felt that, in view of the provision that already existed in the working of the dyarchical form of government in the country, a separate mandate from the

---

1 *Kudi Arasu* issues of 24 November, 1, 8 and 15 December 1925. Also see *Navasakti* issues of 27 November, 4, 11 and 18 December 1925; *Mail*, 23 November 1925; *Hindu*, 23 November 1925.

Congress was not warranted. It was only Ramanathan and the group led by him that stood by Naicker's resolution. The lack of consensus among the various non-Brahman groups was the main reason for the defeat of Naicker's resolution. This became more evident when non-Brahman delegates met separately to discuss the issue.

Soon after Naicker's walk-out from the general session, almost all non-Brahman delegates attending the conference met at the Kamakshi theatre in Kāñchipuram to discuss the principle of proportional representation. As the meeting was convened at the instance of Naicker, he himself proposed T. A. Ramalingam Chettiar, a former Justicite, to preside over it. In proposing him, Naicker made a fervent appeal to the delegates to understand the principal causes of the controversy between Brahmans and non-Brahmans in the country in general, as well as in the Tamilnad Congress in particular. Such causes should be looked into so that timely action might be taken, as otherwise the conflict of interests would eat away the very vitals of the organization. 'To deny the very existence of the controversy altogether', said Naicker, 'would be like binding the wound without treating it.'*[1] He thought that a remedy could be found in the following resolution :

> ....to accept the principle that in all offices and representative institutions, Brahmans, non-Brahmans and the so-called depressed classes shall have representation with due regard to their population strength and communicate this resolution to the National Congress.[2]

The non-Brahman delegates who attended this special meeting began to deliberate on the resolution. Two of them, Singaravelu Chettiar and Krishnaswami Pavalar, were decidedly against it: the former feared that by adopting it the existing differences within the Congress would become more pronounced while the latter condemned the meeting itself as one instigated by the Justicites.[3] Even Varadarajulu Naidu, who had taken an extreme stance over the Gurukulam dining controversy,

---

1 **Kudi Arasu*, 24 November 1925.

2 *Mail*, 23 November 1925.

3 *Mail*, 23 November 1925.

though sympathizing with the spirit underlying the resolution, urged moderation and seems to have said that if they passed such a resolution it would be nothing short of committing political suicide.[1] 'But the general mood of the delegates', as reported by Shanmugam Chettiar, 'was that some provision ought to be made for safeguarding the interests of all communities and removing the suspicion lurking in their minds'.[2] Finally, after a prolonged discussion at the second sitting of the meeting, a general resolution was adopted requesting the Tamilnad Congress to put up for the next general elections candidates 90 per cent of whom should be non-Brahmans. Of this 33⅓ per cent should be from the depressed classes.[3]

The resolution passed at the non-Brahmans' meeting showed that a large number of non-Brahman Congressmen were interested in obtaining a greater share for themselves in the allocation of seats when the party decided to contest the elections. Some others, who had taken an extreme stance, wanted the TNCC to give a statutory status to this principle in order to protect the interests of non-Brahmans against the 'monopolistic tendencies' of Brahmans. The practical minded politicians both from Brahman and non-Brahman groups in the Tamilnad Congress were aware of the prevailing mood among the followers of Ramasami Naicker, but they failed to move the Congress machinery to take positive steps to allay the fears lurking in their minds. Even the leading English newspaper in the presidency, the *Hindu*, failed to suggest a solution for this communal problem. Instead it indulged in platitudes by emphasizing the immediate need for unity within the ranks of Congress, and advised them not to 'fritter away their energies in interminable and vexatious disputes over representation.'[4] Apart from such gratuitous advice from the press no real efforts were made by the popular Brahman leaders to combat communalism in the body politic.

In the absence of a positive response from Brahman leaders, Naicker felt that they were in the national organization only to

---

1 *Hindu*, 23 November 1925.

2 Ibid., 23 November 1925.

3 Ibid., *Mail*, 23 November 1925.

4 *Hindu*, 24 November 1925.

further the former's own political interests rather than to strive for the independence of the country. He thought that Brahman leaders, on account of their vested interests, were opposed to any measure that sought to improve the political fortunes of a majority of non-Brahman community.[1] Hence Naicker tried to enlist the support of non-Brahmans in favour of his resolution. When his efforts fell through for lack of support[2] from non-Brahmans themselves, he attributed the failure of the motion to Srinivasa Iyengar's clever manipulations. Naicker charged Iyengar that he had withdrawn his resolution, after having come to a clandestine understanding with Rajaji to make the communal representation resolution technically null and void. In this political game, Naicker contended, non-Brahmans like Kalyanasundara Mudaliar were used as pawns, because it was Mudaliar who rejected his resolution on technical grounds. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar gave a spirited reply to all these charges in *Navasakti* and made it clear that he was neither swayed by any extraneous considerations nor influenced by any group in rejecting Naicker's resolution.[3]

The events at the Kāñchipuram conference made Ramasami Naicker realize the futility of hoping for an advancement of the interests of the non-Brahmans by remaining in the Congress. This attitude became more firm after the events that took place in the Tamilnad branch of the All India Spinners' Association which was intended to popularize *khaddar* and promote its sale in the country. In 1925 Ramasami Naicker and K. Santhanam, a Śrivaiṣhṇava Brahman, were its president and secretary respectively. Misunderstanding arose between them, when Santhanam in his capacity as secretary appointed a number of persons belonging to his community to key positions in the association. Naicker viewed these appointments as yet another ruse of the Brahmans to promote their interests in organizations sponsored by the Indian National Congress. So, in the name of reorganizing the association, Naicker introduced a series of changes which were particularly aimed at undoing what the secretary had done. But Santhanam outflanked

1 Interview with Ramasami Naicker on 1 June 1969.

2 R. K. Shanmugam Chettiar said, 'the section that demands communal electorate is very small'. *Hindu*, 24 November 1925.

3 *Navasakti*, 27 November 1925 and 18 December 1925. For a detailed account see *Tiru. Vi. Ka., Valkkaikkurippukkal*, pp. 370-83.

him by using his influence with Gandhi, and frustrated Naicker's efforts in reorganizing the association. Gandhi's interference in the affairs of the local branch of the All India Spinners' Association on behalf of a particular community further incensed Naicker against Brahmans in general and hastened his total break with the Congress.[1]

In 1927 Ramasami Naicker decided to leave the Congress, when he came to the conclusion that Gandhi too was furthering sectarian interests by propagating the cultural values of Brahmans among the masses in Tamilnad. What Gandhi spoke during his trip to South India in 1927 was of a piece with what he had spoken on his earlier visit in 1921 on the contributions of Brahmans to Indian culture and tradition and on his belief in *varnashrama dharma*.[2] Addressing a public meeting at Cuddalore on 10 September 1927, Gandhi eulogized Brahmans as the 'repositories of knowledge and embodiments of sacrifice' and advised them to stick to their traditions of austerity, accepting only what non-Brahmans chose to give them. In the same vein he appealed to non-Brahmans not to usher in a new class of untouchables by hating Brahmans, whom he considered the guardians of Hinduism. He further stressed in the same speech that non-Brahmans in their ire against the Brahmans should not wreck the system of *varnashrama dharma*,

---

1 Interview with E. V. Ramasami Naicker on 1 June 1969.

2 In April 1921, addressing a public meeting at Madras, Gandhi said that Hinduism 'owes its all' to the great traditions established by Brahmans, that they as a class could pride themselves on taking the first place in 'self-sacrifice' and 'self-effacement' and that they should remain, as they had declared themselves to be the custodians of the purity of our life'. In the same speech he also warned the non-Brahmans not to attempt 'to rise upon the ashes of Brahminism'. *Hindu*, 9 April 1921. See also *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XIX (Delhi, 1966), p. 546. Over this speech a storm developed even among the nationalist non-Brahmans in Madras. C. Kandaswamy, in a letter to *Young India*, commented that Gandhi's speech exhibited his 'complete ignorance' of the Dravidian contribution to Indian cultural traditions and of 'the inner meaning and causes of the present non-Brahman movement'. He also advised Gandhi to leave the Brahman and non-Brahman controversy 'severely alone' in the interests of the 'great non-co-operation movement', as otherwise 'he would estrange the sympathies of a vast majority of the masses who feel strongly on the above matter'. *Young India*, 11 January 1921. To this Gandhi replied in a similar strain. 'The correspondents have clearly misunderstood me.. I claim that the Brahmins' service to Hinduism or humanity is unaffected and undiminished by the acheivements of the Dravidian civilization which nobody denies or disputes. I warn the correspondents against segregating the Dravidian South from the Aryan North. *Young India*, 27 April 1921, quoted *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XX (Delhi, 1966), pp. 47-48.

the bed-rook of Hinduism.[1] To him this was a universal law and a law of spiritual economics, 'designed to set free man's energy for higher pursuits in life.'[2] In order to uphold this system he accepted the fourfold classification of caste (varna) and the duties to be performed in the different stages of one's life. However, he stoutly rejected the notion of higher and lower status attached to the system of *varnashrama* dharma and asserted that neither the ban on inter-marriage nor that on inter-dining was an integral part of it.[3]

Gandhi's exposition of the code of *varnashrama dharma* and his expressed opinions on Brahmans provoked considerable resentment among a section of non-Brahmans. They felt that *varnashrama dharma* as understood and practised in Tamilnad sanctified the Brahmans position of superiority in society. To them it was the quintessence of the idea of privilege, or superiority and snobbishness. On 14 September 1927, A. Ramaswami Mudaliar, a spokesman of the Justice Party, characterized Gandhi's enunciation of *varnashrama dharma* as 'Gandhi Ashrama Dharma' and said:

> It is not Mahatma Gandhi's Varnashrama Dharma that the world is concerned with and that the non-Brahmans are fighting against but the Varnashrama Dharma which exists today in Southern India and which forces them to accept unnumbered degradations.[4]

Even eminent non-Brahman members in the Tamilnad Congress, like Shanmugam Chettiar and Kalyanasundara Mudaliar, came out in no uncertain terms against Gandhi's pronouncements on the system of *varnashrama dharma*. However much Gandhi 'tried to extol the hidden virtues of varnashrama dharma as he perceived them' said Shanmugam Chettiar, the people of Tamilnad 'would 'understand it only in one way, viz., the accepted Shastric implication of the several rungs of the ladder of Hindu social policy.'[5] Kalyanasundara Mudaliar felt that Gandhi's interpretation of

1 *Young India*, 22 September 1927; quoted in *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXXIV, pp. 510-11.

2 Ibid., p. 511.

3 *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXXIV, p. 511.

4 Justice, 14 September 1927, quoted in A. Ramaswami Mudaliar, *Mirror of the year: Being a Collection of the Leading Articles in Justice*, 1927, (Madras, 1928), p. 153.

5 *Hindu*, (weekly edition), 6 October 1927.

varnashrama dharma would curb individuality, and as such (it should not be encouraged as a norm in the present social set-up.'[1] The Non-Brahman Youth League at its First Provincial Conference held in Madras in 1927, criticized Gandhi's enunciation of his belief in the 'outmoded system' of *varnashrama dharma* and said: 'His (Gandhi's) preaching for the revival of varnashrama dharma would result in great social and economic tyranny and serfdom......'[2] Ramasami Naicker's criticism was even more pungent and devastating, for he felt that in the Tamil country it relegated all the Caste Hindus to the position of Sudras, which meant in the Manusmriti, 'the sons of prostitutes'. If such a Sudra were to follow Gandhi's advice, Naicker said sarcastically at a public meeting in Tinnevelly, he would end up only in serving the Brahmans.[3]

Ramasami Naicker and Ramanathan met Gandhi in September 1927 with a view to modifying his stand on *varnashrama dharma*. They expressed their deep concern over Gandhi's statements and pointed out that this would only strengthen the orthodox Hindu position on the question of untouchability and child marriage, the two evils against which Gandhi himself was contending. Neither were they able to convince Gandhi nor was Gandhi able to win them over to his way of thinking. As their views were diametrically opposed, Naicker expressed to Gandhi his confirmed belief that true freedom for India would be achieved only 'with the destruction of Indian National Congress, Hinduism and Brahminism'.[4] With this he renounced his faith in Gandhi's leadership and began to concentrate on strengthening his newly organized Self-Respect movement.

The motive for inaugurating the Self-Respect movement was Ramasami Naicker's contempt for the caste system and his own bitter experience of it, first in Banaras and later in the Tamilnad Congress. Three important incidents, the Gurukulam controversy, the rejection of the resolution on communal representation at the

---

1 T. V. Kalyanasundaranar, *Manita Valkkaiyum Kanti Atikalum* (Gandhi and Humanism), eight ed. (Madras, 1961), pp. 103-7.

2 *Proceedings of the First Provincial Conference of the League of Non-Brahmin Youth, Central* (Madras, 1927), p.31.

3 *Kudi Arasu*, 7 August 1927.

4 *Kudi Arasu*, 28 August 1927; Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, p.103; Interview with Ramasami Naicker on 1 June 1969.

Kāñchipuram conference and finally his disputation with Gandhi over the system of *varnashrama dharma*, all tended to strengthen Naicker's conviction that social equality could not be achieved through the Indian National Congress, for the influential figures in it either tried to undermine the efforts of others or compromised and supported the vested interests. This he considered a perennial impediment to social and economic progress for a large majority of people in the country. In these circumstances Naicker was left with two alternatives. Either, as suggested by Kalyanasundara Mudaliar and other non-Brahman leaders, he could have continued with the TNCC and strengthened the hands of progressives both in Brahman and non-Brahman groups in their attempts to eradicate social inequalities; or he could have inaugurated a new organization specifically to fight the then prevailing sectarian social practices. As Naicker believed that the first alternative was impossible to achieve in his life-time, he chose the second and founded the Self-Respect Movement.

CHAPTER—III

NAICKER, THE SELF-RESPECT MOVEMENT AND TAMILNAD POLITICS

1927-1934

I

Emergence of the Self-Respect Movement

II

Progress of the Self-Respect Movement

III

Naicker and Tamilnad Politics

IV

Further Radicalization of the Self-Respect Movement

NAICKER, THE SELF-RESPECT MOVEMENT AND TAMILNAD POLITICS

In the annals of the Presidency of Madras the period between 1927 and 1934 was important because of the series of events that took place affecting the social and political life of the people. The elections for the provincial councils in late 1926 were significant, for the electoral alliance formed by the Independent group and the Swarajists enabled them to unseat the Justice Party and terminate its six years of dyarchic rule. Consequently, the period witnessed the installation of Dr. Subbarayan's Independent Ministry in the province. Again the preparations for constitutional changes, the effect of which was to change British policies in the entire Indian sub-continent, resulted in feverish activity among the politicians. Gandhi's salt satyagraha which was looked upon in some quarters as yet another step in the march towards political freedom, caught the imagination of his followers in Madras, and they staged the historic march from Trichinopoly to Vedaranyam in April 1930 to break the salt laws. In addition to these historical events the period witnessed the foundations of the Self-Respect League, which was to emerge as an important organization dedicated to eradicate some of the then existing social practices and cultural beliefs that prevailed among certain caste groups in the province.

Ramasami Naicker had no specific plans of what he intended to do after leaving the Tamilnad Congress in 1927. Many of his colleagues, including Rajaji, wanted him back to the Congress fold. Naicker himself had no political ambitions at this stage as he was not for starting a new political party. Nor was he interested in joining the Justice Party, which had been defeated at the elections and striving hard to stage a come-back. However he made some probings into the possible acceptance of his social views by the leaders of the Justice Party so that he could decide whether or not to cast in his lot with them.

Between 1926 and the first half of 1927 Ramasami Naicker attended all the important meetings of the Justice Party in order to acquaint himself with its activities. This was resented by some of the leading non-Brahman Congressmen, who accused Naicker of

anti-Congress propaganda, while remaining in the Congress.[1] The Justicites were interested in him and therefore invited him specially for their important annual meeting at Coimbatore on 2 July 1927.[2] Two other non-Brahman Congressmen, Varadarajulu Naidu and Kalyanasundara Mudaliar were also invited. At this conference they were asked to give their candid views on the crucial policy question whether or not the members of the Justice Party should opt for the Indian National Congress.[3] Of the three non-Brahman Congressmen, only Ramasami Naicker strongly opposed the motion. Later, however, he supported the move along with the other two, with the result that the Justice Party allowed those members who were inclined to join in the Indian National Congress to do so. At the same conference he made a controversial speech in which he not only demonstrated his hostility towards Brahmans but also condemned the governor for appointing C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, a Smarta Brahman, as the Law Member of the Executive Council. Naicker also moved a resolution urging the Viceroy to recall the Governor of Madras. This resolution was, however, later withdrawn at the instance of Justice leaders[4] who were concerned more with drawing up plans to recapture political power after their election defeat[5] than with indulging in polemics against Brahmans. Naicker sensed the prevailing mood in the Justice Party and decided not to join forces with it, as this would obstruct his own plans to bring about social changes in the Tamil society.

---

1 Ramasami Naicker's indecision is quite evident from his activities in 1926 and 1927 because he had on the one hand continued with his membership in the Tamilnad Congress and on the other participated in the meetings arranged by the Justice Party. This was resented by some of the leading Congressmen including Kalyanasundara Mudaliar, who charged Naicker with anti-Congress propaganda, while remaining in the Congress. T. V. Kalyanasundaranar, *Tiru Vi. Ka. Valkkaikkurippuk-kal*, p. 388.

2 Ibid., p. 393.

3 *Hindu*, weekly edition, 7 July 1927; Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar* pp. 99-100; Interview with Ramasami Naicker on 1 June 1969.

4 Eugene, F. Irschick, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India*, pp. 317-18; Interview with Ramasami Naicker on 1 June 1969.

5 For the results of the 1926 elections see Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, Vol. XVIII., Cmd. 2923, 'Return Showing the Results of Elections in India, 1926' (London, 1927), pp. 10-11.

Unable to toe the line of the Justice Party, Naicker had no other alternative but to strengthen the Self-Respect League founded by S. Ramanathan, one of the articulate young non-Brahman members in the TNCC. Born in Tanjore district of a Śaiva Pillai family (an agricultural caste with high ritual status among non-Brahman caste Hindus) on 15 December 1896, he completed his legal education at Madras in 1918. In the same year he participated in the Amritsar session of the Congress as a delegate of the MPCC. At the behest of Gandhi he boycotted law-courts, and courted imprisonment by participating in the civil disobedience campaign in 1920.[1] Again on Gandhi's suggestion Ramanathan popularized the use of *khaddar* in the country and eventually became the secretary of the All India Spinners' Association in 1926.[2] He was active in it until differences of opinion arose between him and Gandhi on the question of interpretations given to the concept of *varnashrama dharma*. Gandhi's interpretations of *varnashrama* dharma, Ramanathan considered, had no relevance to the social life of Tamilnad, for it meant acceptance of an hierarchy of castes with the concepts of purity and pollution attached to them. The rigidity with which the caste system controlled social life was unacceptable to many progressives, irrespective of their castes, in the context of the changing values in society. Ramanathan himself had an experience of the iniquities of the caste system in his college days, when he had been to a picnic with his Brahman friends. At lunch he was excluded from others for being a non-Brahman by the Brahman host, to which none of his friends objected because inter-dining between Brahmans and non-Brahmans was tabooed by caste rules. He narrates this harrowing experience with candour in his controversial book *Gandhi and the Youth* in the following manner.

> We planned a trip to the Red Hills lake on a holiday. There was swimming and play until we got quite exhausted and hungry. We had arranged food at a Brahmin House. We trooped in with ravenous looks. Every one was admitted, but I was stopped at the gate. I was no

[1] S. Ramanathan, *Gandhi and the Youth*, Second ed. (Madras, 1947), p. 9; Interview with S. Ramanathan on 14 November 1969; C. Rajagopalachariar, *Jail Diary* (Madras, 1922), p. 120.

[2] S. Ramanathan, *Gandhi and the Youth*, pp. 21-22; *Hindu*, 16 February, 1926.

> Brahmin. I was told I should be served outside after the others had finished. I felt I was struck in my face. The shock overwhelmed me and I grew sick with anger. I did not mind the messkeeper. But, my friends! It dawned upon me for the first time that they were all Brahmins. They knew that I was kept out. They did not mind, because it was the custom. It was a matter of course. The lower castes must wait and take their turn after the higher castes are satisfied. That might be all right for others. But how could my friends, so refined, so sensitive, how could they tolerate this monstrous practice? Should I rush in and create a scene? Should I thrash my pals for having connived at this insult offered to me? I turned away from that house, and hid myself under a tree and wept.[1]

He realized the clamant need for an organization that would specifically work to change the artificial structure of the society but nothing was done by him till the Kāñchipuram conference in 1925. The event at this conference once again revived his old idea and the result was the foundation of the Self-Respect League in 1926. Most of its initial members were drawn from the Tamilnad Congress and all of them were young, wanting both in experience and money to run successfully the nascent organization. Therefore, they invited Naicker to head the new organization. This he gladly accepted. Ramanathan himself became its first general secretary.[2] The League was not very active till 1927; neither Naicker nor Ramanathan was in a position to devote attention to it. Naicker was undecided about his future role in the Tamilnad politics while Ramanathan as secretary of the Tamilnad branch of the All India Spinners' Association was preoccupied with his campaign for *khaddar* in the presidency.[3] In mid 1927 Naicker abruptly ended his honey-moon with the Justice Party, and about the same time Ramanathan also left the Tamilnad Congress. Both of them

---

1 S. Ramanathan, *Gandhi and the Youth*, pp.3-4; Eugene F. Irschick, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India*, p. 333.

2 S. Ramanathan, 'Self-Respect Movement' in *Kuttuci Kurucami Ninaivu Malar* (Madras, 1966), p. 39; *Gandhi and the Youth*, p. 23.

3 *Hindu*, 16 February 1926.

worked together for seven successive years to build up the Self-Respect League into a formidable socio-political movement in Tamilnad.

I

The leaders of the Self-Respect movement believed that the emergence of Brahmans as a status group came not from the public and civil positions they held but from the social, cultural and religious values prevalent in society. They also held that, unless these values were proved alien, degrading and sectarian, the non-Brahmans would not realize the ignoble and shameful position to which they had been reduced. They said that the main task of the movement was to infuse into non-Brahmans a sense of pride in their own long forgotten cultural tradition. The Self-Respecters insisted that the term 'non-Brahman' was a misnomer, and that they should in fact be called Dravidians, the inheritors of a proud cultural tradition, a tradition superior to that of the Brahmans. Such a highly cultured community had been tricked into accepting the cultural values propagated by the Āryans when the latter arrived in the South.

According to Naicker the Brahmans were the descendants of the Āryans who were the first to introduce the status-based caste system. This gave them high ritual status and the power to monopolize all secular and religious knowledge, thereby degrading the native Dravidians to an inferior position.[1] The study of the *Vedas*, the observance of Vedic rites and the practice of Vedic rituals were

---

1 *Kudi Arasu*, 5 September 1927.

the prerogatives of Brahmans. Naicker pointed out to the non-Brahmans that Manu,[1] the chief Brahman law giver, degraded the bulk of the population to a position of Sudras, prevented them from accumulating wealth and advocated that their vocation should be to serve the Brahmans.[2] In addition to such prejudicial codes, new rules and regulations were incorporated as and when Brahmans found it necessary to prevent other caste groups from challenging their status and privileges. As a result of such sectarian laws, a large segment of non-Brahman society was degraded to an inferior

---

[1] Laws of Manu and the Brahmans: 'As the Brahmana sprang from (Brahman's mouth, as he was the first-born, and as he possesses the *Veda*, he is by right the lord of this whole creation'. 1-93, pp. 24-25. 'Whatever exists in the world is the property of the Brahmana.... '1-100, p. 26. 'On account of his pre-eminence, on account of the superiority of his origin, on account of his observance of (particular) restrictive rules, and on account of his particular sanctification the Brahmana is the lord of (all) castes *(Varna)*'. X-3, p. 402; Laws of Manu and the Sudras. But a 'Sudra, whether bought or unbought, he may compel to do servile work; for he was created by the self-existent (*Svayambhu*) to be the slave of a Brahmana'. VIII-413, p. 326. 'No collection of wealth must be made by a Sudra, even though he be able (to do it): for a Sudra who has acquired wealth, gives pain to Brahmanas'. X-129, p. 430. 'Let him not recite (the texts) in the presence of Sudras.. IV-99, p. 144. All these quotations are from G. Buhler, (tr.) *The Laws of Manu*, ed. Max F. Muller, 'Sacred Books of the East', Vol. XXV. (Oxford, 1886). Some of the laws which are prejudicial to the Sudras have been translated from Sanskrit texts into Tamil by Swami Sivananda Saraswathi. His book, *Nana Curiyan*, which was published and sold at cost price by the Self-Respect Propaganda Organization in 1928 not only highlights the disabilities suffered by the Sudras under the Aryan legislation, but appeals to the non-Brahmans to reject all those detrimental laws and practices. The Self-Respect English weekly, *Revolt*, condemned the *Manusmriti* thus: 'Many of the Civil Laws are based upon this code (Manudharma Shastra) which has been indisputably proved to be the outcome of the Brahminic supremacy. It is this *Manudharma Shastra* which is responsible for the hypocritical usage of the despicable word 'Sudra': examples of unequal justice in the sphere of marriage, inheritance etc... That these laws are detrimental to the interest of the 97 per cent of the Hindus needs no emphasis.. It is a matter of no mean importance that we the Self-Respecters are unanimous about the immediate necessity for wiping off the inequalities perpetrated by the code of Manu.' *Revolt*, 29 May 1929.

[2] *Kudi Arasu*, 5 and 12 September 1927.

position. This anomaly could be changed, Naicker contended, only by liberating non-Brahmans from Aryan cultural helctry.[1]

Ramasami Naicker considered that, to liberate the culturally-enslaved non-Brahmans, there should be a consistent propaganda indicating the purpose with which Hinduism as a form of religion had been introduced into Tamil society. To do this, he first began to popularize his theory that the Hindu religion was alien to the Tamils. The basic ideas of Hinduism, he said, were rooted in the system of *varnashrama dharma*, which was unknown to the Tamils because their classical literary tradition is significantly silent about it. Likewise the prevailing type of religious rites, rituals and ceremonies now in vogue did not correspond to the religious practices of the ancient Tamils. Further the names of the Hindu gods, and the religious terminology suggested overwhelming Āryan influence. As such the present day Hindu religion was the creation of the Brahmans who were the descendants of the Āryans.[2]

When the Āryans invaded the South, they were struck by the Dravidians' advanced social and political systems and realized that such a progressive people could be subordinated only by deceitful methods.[3] The chief weapon that the Āryan Brahmans pressed into service to subdue the Dravidians was the complicated system of rituals which the Dravidian kings and the merchant communities naively accepted, believing that they would bring them immense benefits in mundane life. At that time they failed to realize that the rites were mere baits to reduce them to a subservient position. Thus the Dravidians were led to believe in the many ceremonies of Brahmans, to accept the Brahmans as their religious mentors, to accord them a status far superior to their own and finally to accept their system of caste which in the long run reduced the entire Tamil community to the position of Sūdras.[4]

This race theory was stretched to such an extent as to include the entire body of the epics, the purāṇas and the shastras and to brand them as instruments of the Āryan Brahmans to trick the

---

[1] Ibid., 12 and 19 September 1927.

[2] E. V. Ramasami, *Arivu Viruntu*, second ed. (Trichinopoly, 1968), p. 1; *Valkkaittunai Nalam*, second pt. (Madras, 1960), p. 35.

[3] *Kudi Arasu*, 26 April 1927.

[4] *Revolt*, 10 April 1929.

gullible Tamils. The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, the two most popular epics, were interpreted by the followers of Ramasami Naicker as stories of the Aryans, depicting the ruses by which they subordinated the Dravidians. Rama, the main character in the story of the *Ramayana*, whom many Hindus regard as the incarnation of God and as the consummation of all that is good and noble in mankind, was ridiculed as the embodiment of vulgarity, obscenity and sexual morbidity. Gurusami, one of the chief followers of Ramasami Naicker, writing on the *Ramayana* commented:

> Our further contention that the story of the *Ramayana* is essentially immoral, is liable to be objected to in the prevailing atmosphere of Rama worship in the country.. the *Ramayana* is a force of evil at the present day, we do not hesitate to draw aside the veil of sanctity, which gives it a mystic influence over men's minds and hides its many absurdities.[1]

Ravana, who is characterized as a villain in the original, was acclaimed as the hero of the Dravidians, who fell a victim to the machinations of the Āryans. Likewise, the characters in the *Mahabharata* were charged with debauchery, adultery and sexual promiscuity.[2] These attacks on the heroes of the epics and especially their sex morals were made in the most intemperate and coarse language. To crown their anti-Brahman and anti-Āryan activities the reformists burned copies of the law books of the Hindus. At a Self-Respecters' meeting held at Lalgudi in Trichinopoly district in June 1928, T. S. Kannappar, the editor of *Dravidan*, made a public bonfire of copies of the *Manusmriti*.[3] Further, the gods in the Hindu pantheon were made the butt of ridicule in speeches and

---

[1] Ibid., 5 December 1928.

[2] *Kudi Arasu*, 3 January 1928.

[3] *Justice*, 12 June 1928; *Kudi Arasu*, 18 June 1928.

writings and were accused of sexual and moral crimes.[1] By these means the Self-Respecters not only tried to belittle and denigrate the works of the so-called Āryan Brahmans but also attacked the puranic Hindu religion as mere superstition. Many Brahman leaders, including Rajaji, were dismayed at these attempts to discredit 'the language, literature, the customs and the sacred books of Sanskrit including the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*'[2] and viewed such acts as a challenge to the traditional religious and social way of life.

These much propagated hypotheses regarding the Dravidians' cultural antiquity and the racial interpretation given to the popular epics were not new to the Tamils. Western researchers like Francis Whyte Ellis and Robert Caldwell, were the first to propound such theories, and later Indian scholars synthesized and publicized them. These concepts had remained, however, virtually a subject of academic discussion and disputation till the first decade of this century. When the Justice Party entered the political scene it exploited these ideas and gave them a political meaning. These cultural and historical concepts were utilized by the leaders of the Justice Party to mobilize the amorphous non-Brahman groups into a cohesive political body so that they could compete with Brahmans for public offices and posts in the civil services. For these social and political reasons they denounced Brahmans as alien Āryans who had usurped the position of Dravidian Tamils, repudiated the system of *varnashrama dharma* and rejected the spiritual leadership and the ritual authority of Brahmans. Although the Self-Respect movement resorted to a similar technique its main concern was to

---

1 Some of the pamphlets like *Intuk Katavulkalin Lilaikal* (The Amorous Acts of the Hindu Gods), and *Ariyak Katavulkal* (The Aryan Gods) published in 1928 and 1929 respectively, accused the Hindu gods in coarse language of many acts of sexual perversity. Swami Sivananda Saraswathi trying to trace the birth of the Vedic sages such as Kalaikkottu Risi (Risya Sirunga), Koutamar (Gautama), Mantaviyar (Mandavya) and Kankeyar (Gangeya), writes in his book *Nana Curiyan* that they were not born to human beings but to deer, cow, frog and donkey respectively. He denounces further the *Manusmriti* and other writings of Brahmans, in trenchant language. Swami Sivananda Saraswathi, *Nana Curiyan* eleventh ed. (Madras, 1968) p. 176.

2 *Hindu*, weekly edition, 12 April 1928.

liberate non-Brahman masses from cultural enslavement of Brahmans. Unless this was done, the leaders of the Self-Respect movement believed there would not be any real progress for non-Brahmans even though they gained political power as envisaged by the Justice Party. Consequently, the two movements differed in their aims as well as in their methods.

The Self-Respect movement differed from the Justice Party both in its mode of appeal and to the communities it hoped to reach. The tone of propaganda of the Self-Respect movement and the Justice Party were conditioned by the type of leadership as well as by the membership. The Justice Party leadership was drawn mostly from the landowning class, the zamindar class and the merchant class, from the middle and the upper middle-class communities such as the Vellala, the Chettiar and the Naidu, which had a high ritual status, wealth and education compared to other non-Brahman caste groups. As all these groups were concentrated in the business centres, the influence of the Justice Party was largely restricted to the business community. As a result, the party, although acting in the interests of non-Brahman communities as a whole, represented chiefly the elite and the bourgeoisie and lacked mass support.[1] The Self-Respect movement, however, directed its appeal primarily to the socially and economically backward non-Brahman communities which were low in the Tamil ritual status, including the scheduled castes, the Vanniyakula Kṣhatriyas, the

---

1 This could be attributed to two factors which many of the old Justicites themselves consider as contributory causes for the eclipse of the party. First, the leaders' inability to articulate in the language of the masses and secondly, their lack of initiative to gain full support from the masses. These were again, *inter alia*, due to the franchise, which was limited to but a few hundred thousand in the twenties and the thirties. Interview with K. M. Balasubramaniam, 28 July 1969; Eugene F. Irschick, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India*, p. 334.

Nadars, the Agamudaiyars and the Isai Vellalars,[1] whose sordid social condition the Self-Respecters brought to the notice of the government in their speeches and writings. Likewise they espoused the cause of the niggardly paid agricultural labourers and unskilled workers, mainly drawn from scheduled castes in rural and urban areas respectively. Thus the Self-Respect movement publicized the social and economic discontent among the backward communities and at the same time enlisted their massive support.[2] Consequently from its inception it assumed the character of a mass movement, though its leaders and its chief propagandists came largely from the Vellala and the Balija Naidu communities. For example Ramasami Naicker and Kannappar were both Balijas[3] whereas Kaivalya Samiyar, S. Ramanathan, J. N. Ramanathan, S. Gurusami and Chinnaiya Pillai belonged to the Vellala community.[4]

---

[1] Vanniyakula Kshatriyas: traditionally a warrior group, but now mostly engaged in agriculture or in agro-based industries. See Edgar Thurston, *Caste and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. VI, pp. 1-28. Nadars: traditionally toddy tappers, now a leading business community in *Tamil Nadu*. See *Caste and Tribes*, Vol. VI, pp. 363-78.Also see, Robert L. Hardgrave, Jr., *The Nadars of Tamilnadu: The Political Culture of a Community in Change* (Berkeley and Los Angeles), pp. 19-42. Agamudaiyars: traditionally the caretakers of royal and zamindari houses, now engaged in agriculture and liberal professions. See *Caste and Tribes*, Vol. I, pp. 5-16. Isai Vellalars: members of the Deva-Dasi community now in various liberal professions. See *Caste and Tribes*, Vol. II, pp. 125-53.

[2] Interview with T. P. Vedachalam, 27 July 1969.

[3] The Balija Naidus or Balijas were probably an off-shoot of the Kammas or Kapus, the agricultural groups dominant in the Telugu districts of the Presidency of Madras. The majority of Balijas live by trade and agriculture. They were one of the first non-Brahman groups to benefit by English education. Those who live in the Tamil districts trace their connections with the Nayak rulers of Madura and Tanjore. In general they enjoyed a high ritual status among the non-Brahmans in the presidency. See Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of South India*, Vol I, pp. 134-45; John Kelsall, *Manual of the Bellary District* (Madras, 1872). p. 82.

[4] Interview with Vedachalam 27 July, 1969; Kaivalya Samiyar, *Kaivalya Camiyar Katturaikal* (Articles of Kaivalya Samiyar) second ed. (2 vols. Madras, 1961), p. 2; M. S. Krishnaswami, 'Marainta Mavirar', *Kuttuci Kurucami Ninaivu Malar*, p. 84.

Though both the leading Justicites and the Self-Respecters came from caste Hindu communities the tone of the propaganda of the Self-Respect movement differed considerably from that of the Justice Party. This was understandable, because the leaders of the Justice Party who were men of learning and sophistication exercised great restraint in what they spoke on the platform and wrote in their journals. But there was little refinement in Ramasami Naicker's speeches and writings, for he did not have the benefit of a respectable education in English or in any of the vernacular languages nor was there anyone in the party who could have a moderating influence on him. The lack of polish in his spoken and written words became increasingly apparent whenever he came to speak or write on the caste system and on puranic Hindu religion.[1] Since he determined the policy and tone of the propaganda of the movement, even educated young men like Gurusami and Ramanathan employed coarse and

---

[1] In late 1928 Ramasami Naicker advocated the following measures to curb even the very notion of caste: 'A government pledged to eradicate caste, must be in a position to proscribe all books and literature that glorify caste division, however ancient or sacred they may be. A public bonfire must be made of all those books that harbour superstition and caste. All those Sankaracharyas and Matathipathis that still practise caste must be jailed or exiled.' A. M. Dharmalingam, *Periyar E. V. R. : Social Reform or Social Revolution* (Madras, 1965), p. 18.

immoderate language while attacking the caste system and popular religion.[1]

A decade earlier the leaders of the Justice Party had attacked the caste system for introducing the concepts of untouchability and pollution, but they radically differed from the Self-Respecters on the question of religion.[2] It is no doubt true that Justice

---

1 See the article of Gurusami on the *Ithihasas* published in the *Revolt* from 21 November 1928 to 23 January 1929. In those articles he highlighted only the incidents of promiscuous sexual relations narrated in the *Ithihasas*. Explaining the causes for the birth of Rama as the incarnation of the Vishnu Gurusami gives the following reasons: Vishnu falls in love with Jalantharasura's wife, Brindha; when the Asura dies, Vishnu takes her husband's shape and fulfills his desire. When Brindha becomes aware of the fraud, she curses him, "Ye, Vishnu, since you have played false with another's wife, thy wife shall be abducted by thine enemy. And since you have brought the dead body of my husband by the help of the monkeys, then thou shalt wander in the woods in the midst of the monkeys". Brindha dies by throwing herself into the blazing fire. Vishnu, whose passion for Brindha is unquenchable, rolls himself on her ashes, and is satisfied by wearing the Tulsi plant, which springs up from her remains. (This occurs in *Maha Skanthapurana*, *Dhakka Kandh*, 23rd chapter). Once Arputhakshan, the chief of Siva Ganas, discovers Vishnu in bed with his wife Lakshmi, during the daytime, Vishnu does not rise up from the bed. Arputhakshan gets angry and acquaints Nandhi (the Bull) Siva's lieutenant, with the matter. Nandhi curses Vishnu to take birth as Rama, and suffer the separation of his wife. (Ref., *Siva Ragasyam* 3rd amsa, 2nd Kandh, 43rd sargh). A similar story occurs also in the 4th sargh of the same purana where the saint Brihu, instead of Arputhakshan, is said to have found Vishnu lying with Lakshmi. Vishnu does not rise, but asks him not to enter. The saint takes umbrage and curses him. *Revolt*, 21 November 1928.

2 Addressing the Justice Party confederation in 1917 Theagaraya Chettiar denounced the system of hereditary exclusive classes as a tool of oppression in the hands of Brahmans in the following manner: 'It is the Aryans who have introduced this birth distinction, which they have elaborated into the system of Varnashrama Dharma with its concomitant evils. It was that civilisation which brought about illiteracy in the country, the pedestal on which was erected the exclusive oligarchy of Brahmins . . . . Every successive attempt to put down the Brahminical tyranny ended in failure, so much so that the Brahminical influence grew stronger and stronger, with the result that they elaborated the present system of untouchability and pollution.' T. Varadarajulu Naidu., (comp.), *The Justice Movement*, 1917; Eugene F. Irschick, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India*, pp. 335-36.

leaders bitterly criticized the intermediary role of Brahmans in the Hindu religion, but they were in their personal life deeply religious, discouraged atheism and refrained from making comments that would hurt the religious sentiments of the people. On the other hand the leaders of the Self-Respect movement unreservedly condemned the organized religions, heaped ridicule upon the gods of the Hindu pantheon, questioned the authenticity of religious texts, proclaimed atheism as the panacea for all the evils, in Hindu religion and society, and finally demanded destruction of 'old symbolisms, the ancient pictures and the hoary traditions and culture.'[1] Ramasami Naicker in the course of his presidential address at the South Indian Social Reformers conference said that the problem facing the Nationalists, the Self-Respecters and the Socialists was not social reform but really 'destructive work' undertaken with courage and resolution. What he meant by 'destructive work' was to reject all those religious customs and symbols which had contributed to the rise of a small status group with exclusive privileges and to the prepetuation of social inequality. He compared such customs and symbols to a polluted tank fit only to be filled up rather than to be used for public benefit.[2] To those who advocated that old symbols and arts should be preserved, Ramasami Naicker cited in the course of the same speech the efforts of Rāmānuja, the Vaiṣhṇava saint, who in his 'anxiety to upgrade the untouchables' and at the same time 'preserve the ancient symbols', initiated the Pariahs into Vaiṣhṇavism by decorating them with *namam* on their foreheads and by investing them with the *punul.*[3] Rāmānuja succeeded in preserving the old symbols but failed to bring about the much desired equality in society. Therefore Ramasami Naicker advocated that social reformers should not 'flinch in destroying at once the things which would not change with the changing conditions of the world.'[4]

---

1 *Revolt*, 5 December 1928.

2 A. M. Dharmalingam, *Periyar E.V.R.: Social Reform or Social Revolution*, pp. 1-2.

3 *Pariah*: Untouchable caste in Tamilnad. *Namam*: Sacred mark put on the forehead mostly by the Vaishnavites, the worshippers of Vishnu. *Punul*: A cotton thread worn across the chest by the twice-born Brahman.

4 *Revolt*, 5 December 1928.

Ramasami Naicker's opinions and views on the purāṇic religion, the institution of caste and Brahmanism formed the core of the principles of the Self-Respect movement. It disseminated these principles mainly through its official organ, *Kudi Arasu*, which Naicker founded on 2 May 1924. The object of this Tamil weekly was to put across his 'frank views' on various socio-political matters, to rouse the social consciousness of the common man, to propagate and popularize the concepts of social equality and fraternity and finally to eradicate the caste system, Explaining the reasons for starting this weekly Naicker said, 'there are many papers in the country but they are afraid to be true to their conscience.... Unlike those newspapers, I propose to give expression courageously in *Kudi Arasu*, to the truth as I see it.'*[1] He held fast to the aims and objects with which the paper was started by publishing, from 1925 onwards, a series of articles scoffing at Brahmanical rites and rituals and purāṇnic Hinduism. Some of the articles published in *Kudi Arasu* on these themes since 1925 are as follows: 'Who is Fit to Receive Alms: Brahmans?', 'Why we criticize the Brahmans?', 'Pilgrimage and the Truth About the Holy Places', 'Is *Kudi Arasu's* Criticism Against the Brahmans Justified?'[2] These titles themselves indicate the theme of the articles. They were mostly written by Kaivalya Samiyar, a roving mendicant and a confirmed atheist, known for his scholarship in theology and in logic. His articles popularized *Kudi Arasu* and brought many intelligent youths into the fold of the Self-Respect movement.[3] Yet the paper directed its main attention to the masses, and therefore there was a need for another paper which would carry the message of the Self-Respect movement to the English educated as well as to the people outside the Tamil districts of the presidency.

Ramanathan took the initiative, and on 7 November 1928 a weekly in English called the *Revolt* was started under the joint editorship of Ramanathan and Ramasami Naicker. In fact the former edited the paper while the latter provided financial support. Ramanathan stated in the first issue:

---

1 *Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, p. 87.

2 Kaivalya Samiyar, *Kaivalya Camiyar Katturaikal* (Articles of Kaivalya Saimyar), Vol. 1, pp. 8-19; 20-39; 46-62; 111-19.

3 Interview with Ramanathan on 14 November 1969.

> They (the Brahman politicians) would draw us to other fields which the *Kudi Arasu* cannot reach. They would conduct their campaign in the foreign tongue. The need has risen, therefore, for us to extend the sphere of our operation and speak in the English language so as to obtain a wider hearing for our message.[1]

Through this English paper, Ramanathan tried to enlarge the scope and activities of the Self-Respect movement in the presidency. But he was unsuccessful because the number of readers was small and the few sympathetic ones were frightened off by the tone and content. Gurusami's articles on the epics, most of them on the *Ramayana*, were characteristic examples to judge the paper. His aim in writing those articles was to draw aside the veil of sanctity attached to the epics which gave them a mystic influence over men's minds and to show the epic characters' sexual perversities and despicable qualities which were detestable to the moral standards of the Tamils.[2] When the first article was published the readers were shocked by its interpretation of the story of the *Ramayana* because it questioned the infallible qualities of the epic characters. Readers wrote several letters to the editors, protesting against the ignoble treatment of the theme and questioning the motive of the paper in drawing attention to the ugly features of the epic. Some readers argued that the *Ramayana* should be read only as a form of literature and a work of art portraying human virtues and weaknesses and that to take it as literal history would be twisting the aim of the author, Valmiki. Gurusami replied in an article of 5 December 1928:

> Our object in publishing the series of articles..on the *Ithihasas*, is to encourage a study of the ancient literature of our country with a critical mind..our contention is that the *Ramayana* is valuable only as reflecting the mentality of the people who wrote those stories. The *Ithihasas* are not to be relied on as accurate chronicles of events nor should they be taken as portraying human virtues that hold good for all time. The *Ramayana* is

---

1 *Revolt*, 7 November 1928.

2 Ibid.,5 December 1928.

neither a history of ancient times nor a book of morals applicable to our times.[1]

Articles of a controversial nature continued to be published, ignoring the protests and the feelings of the reading public. So the paper lost support. As a result its circulation was limited to a few thousand and its influence was mainly upon the radical section of the student population.[2]

Ramasami Naicker was not greatly concerned about the lack of response to the party newspapers. He attached more importance to public meetings than to the press for the exposition of his concept of self-respect. T. P. Vedachalam, a former general secretary of the Dravidian Federation, popularly known as Dravida Kazhagam, remarked that 'as a propagandist Naicker had very few equals in the past nor would he have any in the future.'[3] Ramasami Naicker addressed on an average one meeting a day,[4] and, along with a band of able

---

1 *Revolt*, 5 December 1928.

2 Interview with Vedachalam, 27 July 1969.

3 Ibid.

4 Interview with Vedachalam. We have no statistics for this period, but the following chart indicating the number of public meetings Naicker addressed during the years 1964, 1965, and 1967 to 1969 gives some idea of his speech making activity some four decades ago:

Naicker's Age	Year	Total number of public meetings and private functions Naicker attended	
Between 85 and 86	1963 Sept. to 1964 Aug.	162	a
86 and 87	1964 Sept. to 1965 Aug.	237	b
87 and 88	Not available		
88 and 89	1966 Sept. to 1967 Aug.	144	c
89 and 90	1967 Sept. to 1968 Aug.	161	d
90 and 91	1968 Sept. to 1969 Aug.	173	e

At all these public meetings and private functions he spoke for 45 to 90 minutes.

a	*Periyar's 86th Birthday Commemoration Souvenir*,			Madras, 1964, pp. 73-79.
b	do	87th	do	1965, pp. 73-81.
c	do	89th	do	1967, pp. 105-11.
d	do	90th	do	1968, pp. 113-20.
e	do	91st	do	1969, pp. 89-95.

speakers,[1] disseminated the central ideal of the movement: to wreck 'Brahminism, the root cause of all ills.'[2]

II

The Self-Respecters addressed to the socially low and economically poor groups such as the Nadar, the Agamudaiyar, the Isai Vellalar and the Sengunthar. Their address was also directed to a large group of scheduled castes like the Paraiyan and the Pallan. Members of these communities inhabited all the Tamil districts and their concentration was more in certain districts than in others. In Tinnevelly and Ramnad districts Nadars predominated, for in these districts they formed 37.46 and 17.17 per cent respectively of the total population in 1921. It was equally true with regard to Madura and Coimbatore districts, where they formed 11.13 and 6.81 respectively of the population.[3] As the Nadars were originally toddy-tappers, an occupation considered to be polluting by caste Hindus, their ritual status was far below that of Sūdras.[4]

Professional keepers of royal and zamin houses were known as Agamudaiyas. Some among them were employed as *chef de cuisine* in royal palaces and as such, they lived in cities like Madura, Tanjore and Trichinopoly, the centres of power of South Indian kings. Their occupation was not considered a derogatory one, yet their social status was not higher than that of Sūdras.[5]

Members of the Isai Vellala community came under the classification of Sūdras. The terms Isai Vellala and Deva Dasi are synonymous and they refer to the community from which

[1] These included S. Ramanathan, Kaivalya Samiyar, S. Gurusami, Ayyamuthu, K. Alagirisami, Mayavaram Natarajan, Nagai Mani and Pettai Dharmalingam.

[2] K. M. Balasubramaniam, *Periyar E. V. Ramasami*, p. 38.

[3] *Census of India*, 1921 : *Madras, Vol. XIII, pt. II*, pp. 118-123.

[4] For a detailed account of the traditional status of Nadars see, Robert L. Hardgrave Jr., *The Nadars of Tamilnad: The Political Culture of a Community in Change* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969), pp. 21-31. E. Thurston. *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. VI (Madras, 1909), pp. 363-73.

[5] For an account of the occupation and other information regarding the Agamudaiyas see E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. I, pp. 5-10. Interview with Vedachalam, 27 July 1969.

girls were recruited to do certain temple chores, Musicians and dancers among them gave public concerts in temples on festive occasions.[1] They too, for professional reasons, lived close to ancient historical centres such as Tanjore, Trichinopoly and Coimbatore, where temples are numerous. As many as 1823, 1260 and 1228 temples existed respectively in these three districts.[2] Isai Vellalas as a community had at one time enjoyed considerable social position,[3] but they lost it when a new class of prostitutes arose among them.

Another important social group was the Sengunthas or Kaikolans: a professional group of weavers spread over the districts of Tamilnad. But in none of the districts did they exceed more than three per cent of the total population including Coimbatore, North Arcot and Salem, where they lived in large numbers.[4] They had a higher literacy rate than most of the non-Brahman communities, including the Vellalas, for nearly 20 per cent of them were literates according to the 1931 census.[5] A sub-section of Sengunthas suffered from the same social stigma as the Isai Vellalas.[6] Sengunthas as a community had a lesser ritual status and therefore they were classified under the blanket term of Sūdras.

The Vanniyakula Kshatriyas were a professional group of agricultural labourers and soldiers in native armies and were confined largely to South Arcot, North Arcot, Salem and Chingleput districts. In 1931 Vanniyas constituted 2,349,920 out of a total population of 8,810,583 in these districts or about a fourth

---

1 E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. II, pp. 125-28.

2 *Census of India*, 1961: *Madras IX, pt. XI-D, Temples of Madras State: Tanjore* (to be published), p. 2; *Coimbatore and Salem* (Madras, 1968, p. 1; *Tiruchirapalli and South Arcot* (Madras, 1966), p. 2.

3 E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, p. 126.

4 In Coimbatore, North Arcot and Salem the Sengunthas were 66,444, 63,667 and 61,768 respectively in 1931. *Census of India*, 1931: *Madras, Vol. XIV, Pt. II* (Madras, 1932), p. 309.

5 Ibid., pp. 277 and 309.

6 E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. II, p. 127 and Vol. III, p. 37.

of the population.[1] They were an economically poor and a socially backward community.

The members of scheduled castes came a step below the ranks of non-Brahman communities. The election report of the Government of Madras enumerates 78 scheduled castes and among them the Pallas and Paraiyas are important because of their numerical strength.[2] In 1931 nearly 90 per cent or 745,169 out of 825,224 Pallas were confined to Tinnevelly, Ramnad, Tanjore and Trichinopoly districts.[3] Although Paraiyas were distributed in all the Tamil districts, over 50 per cent or 663,916 out, 1,117,197 lived in Tanjore, Chingleput, South Arcot and Salem.[4] Many among them had once been feudatory serfs, cultivating lands for the Vellala land-lords and other caste Hindus.[5] The British administrators succeeded in removing the legal disabilities under which the Pallas and Paraiyas suffered and thereby helped them in raising their status from serfs to agricultural labourers. Nevertheless, the caste Hindus treated them as untouchables and unapproachables and kept them beyond the pale of their own social system.

In the early decades of this century the English educated leaders of some of these backward and outcaste groups formed associations which acted as instruments of social and political mobilization. The prominent among such associations were the Nāḍār Mahājana Śaṅgam (1910), the Vaṉṉiyakula Kṣhatriya

---

1 *Census of India*, 1931: *Madras, Vol. XIV, pt. II*, p. 310. For an account of the occupation and other details regarding the Palli or Vanniyan see, E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. VI, pp.9-11; T. Ayakkannu Nayakar's *Vanniyakula Vilakkam* (A Treatise on the Vanniya Caste) (n.p., 1891) and *Varuna Darpanam* (History of the Vanniyas) (n.p., 1901) and T. Parthasarathi Nayakar's, *Vanniyar Pirapava Curyodayam* (Vanniyas Episodes) (Madras, 1929) give an elaborate account of the origin and history of the Vanniyas.

2 M. R. O., *Public* (*Elections*), *G. O*. 673, 20 February 1956.

3 *Census of India*, 1931: *Madras, Vol. XIV, pt. II*, p. 307.

4 Ibid., p. 309.

5 Dharma Kumar's work focuses attention on the forms of agrestic servitude to which Pallas and Paraiyas were subjected in the Madras Presidency during the Nineteenth century. Dharma Kumar, *Land and Caste in South India*, pp. 43-45; E. thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. V, pp. 472-73 and Vol. VI, pp. 114-15.

Śaṅgam (1919), the Seṅguntha Mahājana Śaṅgam (1908), the Viswakarma Mahājana Śaṅgam (1912) and the Ādi Drāvida Mahājana Sabha (1892). Initially their objective was to acquire a new social status for the communities they represented. With the exception of the Seṅguntha Mahājana Śaṅgam, all other associations strove to change the original names of their communities into more euphemistic ones. For this purpose appeals and representations were made to the government. On representations from the Nāḍār Mahājana Śaṅgam, the Government of Madras issued a directive in 1921, according to which the current term 'Nāḍār' replaced the original name 'ṣhaṉāṉ' in all official records.[1] Likewise the members of the Viswakarma community, the Pallis and the scheduled castes succeeded in having their names changed to Āchari,[2] Vaṉṉiyakula Kṣhatriya and Ādi Drāvida[3] respectively.

Apart from acquiring a new image through change of names, community organizations created a new awareness among their members. Educated members of these associations represented their communities in all representative institutions such as state legislatures, municipal and district boards. There they worked for the social and political upliftment of their respective communities. They wielded considerable influence in government circles as well as in their own community. To some extent the government also depended on the co-operation of these leaders for successful implementation of government measures. In most cases they cooperated with the government, voicing forth the views of their communities. There were cases where unpopular measures were revoked on their advice.

Such being the power and influence of community leaders at this stage, it was nothing unusual for Naicker to seek their co-operation and help in order to propagate his new message of self-respect. Leaders like W. P. A. Soundarapandiya Nadar, Rettamalai R. Srinivasan, M. C. Rajah, N. Sivaraj and others gave their support to Naicker. Except for Sivaraj, all the others were active members of the Justice Party. W. P. A. Soundarapandiya Nadar (1893-1953) of Pattiveeranpatti was one of the

1 M. R. O., *Law (General) G. O. No*. 785, dated 7 July 1921.

2 Ibid., *G. O*. No. 1955, dated 19 November 1921.

3 Ibid., *G. O. No*. 817, dated 25 March 1922.

most respected leaders of the Nadar community and for 21 years he served the Nadar Mahajana Sangam as its vice-president and president. He represented his community in the Madras Legislative Council from 1920 to 1937.[1] Srinivasan, Rajah and Sivaraj belonged to groups described as "depressed communities." Very little information is available about Srinivasan, except that he was a very respected and elderly Ādi Drāvida leader, who worked for the social uplift, of his community.[2] Rajah was an outspoken leader of the scheduled castes and a member of the Justice Party. As an important spokesman of the Ādi Drāvidas in the South, he represented his community on numerous government bodies and was a member of the Madras Legislative Council. He was a minister in the interim ministry headed by Sir K. V. Reddi Naidu after the 1937 elections.[3] Though not an active member of the Justice Party, Sivaraj expounded its views among his students in the Madras Law College. In 1926 and again in 1930 he was nominated to represent his community in the Madras Legislative Council.[4]

Very little information is available regarding the leaders of other disadvantaged non-Brahman communities who supported Naicker's Self-Respect movement. Those mentioned above realized that his movement could serve the non-Brahman masses on the social front more effectively than the Justice Party, whose leaders were preoccupied with national politics. For reasons of political expediency Justicites restrained themselves from introducing new social legislations without preparing beforehand the masses to accept them. When the Self-Respect movement came forward with its plans to focus non-Brahmans' attention upon the inegalitarian social practices, leaders like Soundarapandiya Nadar thought that Naicker's move would help to educate the masses to realize the need for social legislation and this in turn would induce the Justicites to act on the political front to eradicate social inequalities prevalent in Tamil society. Nadar

---

1 Robert L. Hardgrave, Jr., *The Nadars of Tamilnad*, p. 177.

2 T. V. Kalyanasundaranar, *Tiru .Vi. Ka. Valkkaikurippukkal*, p. 575.

3 *Justice Party Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, 1968 (*Madras*, 1968), p. 338; T. V. Kalyanasundaranar, *Tiru. Vi. Ka. Valkkaikurippukkal*, pp. 572-76.

4 *Justice Party Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, 1968, pp. 339-40.

was perhaps the first to support Naicker and encourage his followers to practise the Self-Respect ideals in their personal lives. As a result of Soundarapandiyan's efforts, a large section of Nadars de-Sanskritized their life-style, dispensed with some of the Hindu rituals and performed their religious functions like marriage etc., without the help of Brahman priests.[1] Nadar's lead was emulated by others and they all became Naicker's close associates in his efforts to reject the Brahman claim to special privileges in Tamil society. This technique of approaching community leaders, instead of going directly to their members was a calculated move on the part of Naicker, for it made his task easier. The result was rewarding.

Within a year of inaugurating the Self-Respect movement many branches sprang up all over the Tamil districts of the presidency. There were about sixty well-established branches: one branch for each district and several sub-branches for all important towns in a district. Many of these sub-branches were mainly located in Tanjore, Coimbatore, Ramnad, Tinnevelly, South and North Arcot districts.

Many reasons can be attributed to this phenomenal growth. Soundarapandia Nadar was largely responsible for the spread of Self-Respect movement in Ramnad and Tinnevelly. The support and sympathy of the Pallas and their leaders was yet another reason for its popularity. The Pallas constituted more than a third of the entire population in these districts.[2] The rich delta district of Tanjore, was the traditional centre of Brahman orthodoxy and in this district alone lived one fourth or 120,029 of the total Brahman population of 494,721 in 1931.[3] The presence of a large number of Brahmans with substantial

[1] Robert L. Hardgrave, Jr., *The Nadars of Tamilnad*, pp. 177-78.

[2] *Census Of India*, 1931: *Madras*, Vol. XIV, Pt. II, p. 307.

[3] Ibid., p. 307.

landed interests[1] was in itself a challenge and spurred the phenomenal growth of the Self-Respect movement in Tanjore. Added to this was the presence of an unusually large population of Adi Dravidas, who were largely employed as agricultural labourers. They accounted for nearly a fourth or 508,105 of the district population of 2,385,920.[2] The same reasons cannot be advanced in the case of Coimbatore district, for there were no large concentrations, of Brahmans or scheduled castes groups. But it was Naicker's home district and one could naturally expect that his own community members would have played effective role in the spread of the movement. Besides, Coimbatore had a large number of cotton-mill workers[3] and as the Self-Respecters spoke on behalf of the labourers in their own idiom the movement gathered adherents among them, although the exact number of members is not easily ascertained. The spread of the movement in South and North Arcot districts can be attributed to the presence of both backward non-brahmans and scheduled caste groups. Nearly half of the total population of Vanniyas and the Adi Dravidas, with the exception of Pallas and Paraiyas and a quarter of Senguthas lived in these two districts.[4] In Tanjore, Tinnevelly and Coimbatore alone there were about 35 branches with 2,500 members, forming more than half of the total membership of about 4,000.[5] Besides, over 100 youth organizations

---

1 Area studies made in Tanjore villages by socio-anthropologists, like Andre Beteille, Dagfinn Sivertsen and E. Kathleen Gough reveal that Brahmans held substantial land-holdings at the villages they investigated and their observations of the entire district. Andre Beteille, *Caste, Class, and Power: Changing Patterns of Stratification in a Tanjore Village* (California, 1971), pp. 15, 193; Dagfinn Silvertsen, *When caste Barrier's Fall:A study of social and Economic Change in a South Indian Village*, pp. 47, 56; E. Kathleen Gough, 'The Social Structure of a Tanjore Village' in McKim Marriott's (Ed.,) *Village India: Studies in the Little Community* (Chicago and London, 7th impression, 1967), pp. 41, 49.

2 *Census of India*, 1931: *Madras*, Vol. XIV, Pt. II, pp. 307 and 309.

3 Coimbatore district is the main centre of textile industry, for approximately half of all the mills in the state are located here. James J. Berna, *Industrial Entrepreneurship in Madras State* (Lond, 1960), p. 23.

4 *Census of India*, 1931: *Madras*, Vol. XIV, Pt. II, pp. 307, 309-10.

5 *Kudi Arasu*, 3 December 1928. By 1933 the number of Self-Respect branches throughout the Tamil districts rose to 117 with over 10,000 members. *Kudi Arasu*, 9 April 1933.

subscribing to the views of the movement sprang up like mushrooms in different parts of the Tamil districts. Although it is not now possible to assess the exact membership of these branches, it would be safe to assume that each one of them would have had at least ten members on its rolls. To direct and control these branches and other constituent bodies within the movement, the need for an organized central committee with a constitution seemed pressing.[1] Ramanathan was the first to think on these lines of forming a central committee which would be 'capable of controlling and guiding the immense energies liberated by the Self-Respect movement'.[2] Both Naicker and Ramanathan discussed at length the possibilities of holding a provincial conference as early as possible, in order to streamline the policies and form a central committee. Accordingly, a meeting consisting of all the office bearers of district branches was convened in December 1928. At this convention it was decided to hold a provincial conference.[3]

The First Provincial Self-Respect conference, which was held at Chingleput on 17 February 1929, provided the opportunity for the Self-Respect leaders to assess the impact of their propaganda among the elite of the non-Brahman community and to evolve a future programme. The First Minister of the Madras Presidency, Dr. P. Subbarayan,[4] in delivering his opening address echoed the views of the Self-Respecters when he said that Tamils would neither be capable of producing leaders possessing right political judgements to work the modern democracy nor deserve to claim equality in the comity of nations, as long as they lacked right social judgement by remaining 'priest-ridden, caste-divided, superstitious people, practising early marriages, consigning widows to a life of misery, and

1 Appendix: I The Draft Constitution of the Self-Respect League, which was published in the *Revolt* on 30 January 1929, was adopted at the first Provincial Self-Respect Movement conference held at Chingleput on 17 February 1929.

2 *Revolt*, 30 January 1929.

3 *Kudi Arasu*, 10 December 1928.

4 Dr. P. Subbarayan as First Minister of the Presidency of Madras from 4 December 1926 to 27 October 1930 was a social reformer. He was the Minister for Education and Law in Rajagopalachariar's Ministry from 15 July 1937 to 29 October 1939.

worshipping gods who are believed to get polluted by the contact of the poor and the down-trodden'.[1] He also said that the Hindu religion as commonly understood and as taught by the 'ignorant priesthood' made a man an egoist rather than an altruist. But the true aim of religion ought to be to instil in man an unselfish regard for and devotion to the interest of others. Such a commendable aim of religion could not be made a reality in a civilization wedded to the caste system.[2] Since the main aim of the Self-Respecters was to break this barrier of caste, Subbarayan said, they should not dissipate their energy in holding conferences, but conserve it to train a band of young men who would tour the country like the Buddhist monks of yore 'to preach to the masses this new cult' of Self-Respect and proselytize them for this movement.[3]

Subbarayan set the tone for the conference by expressing views analogous to those of the Self-Respecters; those who spoke after him affirmed the soundness of the Self-Respect ideology and gave expression to anti-brahmanical sentiments and their belief in the Dravidians' cultural pre-eminence. M. K. Reddi, the chairman of the reception committee, in his welcome address chastised the priestly hierarchy 'for enshrouding the people in superstition and maintaining them in a state of suicidal ignorance, in pursuance of an all too iniquitous scheme to retain temporal power as well, and preserve in an unchallengeable position their arrogated prestige as custodians of the portals of heaven'.[4] To remedy this anomalous position and to eliminate the evils that made such heavy incursions into society under the aegis of religion, he desired that there should arise leaders of the calibre of Luther, Lenin, Mussolini, Kemal Pasha and King Amanullah, to lead a 'thorough-paced revolution'.[5] Soundarapandiya Nadar in his presidential address criticized Brahmans for foisting on Tamils the divisive caste system. Then he glorified the non-sectarian nature of the ancient Tamil classics like the *Tirukkural* and the *Cilappatikaram*. At the same time he despised the Sanskrit *Puranas*, *Ithihasas*, *Vedas* and *Agamas* as the

---

1 T. A. V. Nathan (ed.), *The Justice Year Book* 1929 (Madras, 1930), pp. 109-10.

2 T. A. V. Nathan (ed.), *The Justice Year Book* 1929, p. 110.

3 Ibid., p. 110.

4 Ibid., p. 144.

5 Ibid., p. 114.

by-product of the Aryans' false teachings, because they were sectarian and created discord among the people. Works which created social inequality based on the pernicious system of caste, Nadar contended, were alien to the Tamil genius and therefore they should not be regarded as works of literature but a 'mere rubbish heap'.[1]

If the speeches of the three main speakers on the inaugural day of the conference indicated that the non-Brahman elite were concerned as much as the Self-Respecters in rationalizing social and religious institutions in order to make them egalitarian, the many resolutions adopted at the conference showed the future course of the movement in achieving its aims. This approach was concerned with educating the masses not merely through the press and on the platform but by positive deeds aimed at remedying the sectarian values practised in society. To destroy the caste system root and branch, the Self-Respecters appealed to the government not to recognize caste distinction either in the administration or in the law of the country and also urged the popular representatives chosen by the people to legislate against the institution of caste. On their part, the Self-Respecters dropped the caste appellations appended to their names, divested themselves of all caste symbols and encouraged inter-caste marriages.[2] Secondly, they championed the cause of women because the Self-Respecters believed that if the social restrictions to which the women had been subjected were removed they could occupy their legitimate place in society and play

---

1 T. A. V. Nathan (ed.), *The Justice Year Book* 1929, p. 120.

2 When it was resolved at the conference that all suffixes and terminations connotative of caste, sect or community should be given up, that no mark of caste or sect should be worn on any part of the body and that all should adopt a uniform dress, Ramasami Naicker, Soundarapandiya Nadar and a host of others dropped their caste names such as Naicker, Nadar, Mudaliar etc. forthwith and vowed not to use any mark, symbol or mode of dress indicative of caste. T. A. V. Nathan (ed.), *thr Justice Year Book* 1929, p. 127. The Self-Respecters followed strictly what they preached and by 1932 there, were 150,000 people in the province who had dropped their caste names and caste marks. *Kudi Arasu*, 26 June 1932. In 1930 when Subbarayan introduced a bill to throw open to scheduled castes all roads and places of worship maintained by public funds, and again in the same year, when he introduced the common hostel system for girls of all castes and religions studying in the city colleges, the Self-Respecters extended their full support to him, *Kudi Arasu*, 11 May 1930.

a dominant role in reform activities. So the Self-Respecters denounced child marriages, the dowry system, the prohibition of widow remarriage[1] and the Devadasi system. They upheld women's rights to property and inheritance, to divorce, to practise the modern methods of birth control and to marry outside their caste group.[2] Thirdly, the Self-Respecters thought that if the Hindu religion gave Brahmans a sacerdotal position in society, religious institutions like the temples were the sources of their income. As a result the priestly class had been leading a comparatively easy life, without contributing anything to the material resources of the community, while non-Brahmans toiled to earn their bread. The Self-Respecters held that such hard earned money was squandered in celebrating innumerable Brahmanical rites and rituals and in maintaining the many Hindu temples. These views were most likely based on the preponderant number of temples in Tamilnad and the equally large number of priests employed in them. The following table II indicates the total number of temples dedicated to Śiva, Vishṇu and their consorts and to Murugan in the Tamil districts in 1962.[3] Many temples would have been built for these deities after the 1920's.

---

1 Even as early as 1909 Ramasami Naicker shocked his family members by encouraging his niece to remarry after she had lost her husband at the age of eight. Periyar E. V. Ramasami, *Valkkai Oppantam* (A collection of presidential speeches delivered by Ramasami Naicker at the Self-Respect marriages) (Madras, 1959), pp. 77-79. Although the exact number of Self-Respecters who married widows is not available, some of the earlier associates of Ramasami Naicker claim that it would run into severa thousands. Interview with Ramanathan, 14 November 1919.

2 T. A. V. Nathan (ed), *The Justice Year Book* 1929, p. 129.

3 Figures for Tanjavur were obtained from the office of the Census Operations in Madras.

2 & 3 India, Census Commissioner, *Census of India*, 1961: *Madras IX, Pt. XID, Temples of Madras State*: *Coimbatore and Salem* (Madras, 1968), p. 3; p. 335 respectively.

4 *North Arcot and Nilgris* (Madras, 1968), p. 5.

5 *Kanyakumari and Tinnevelly* (Madras, 1968), p. 171.

6 & 7 *Tiruchirappalli and South Arcot* (Madras, 1966). p. 2; p. 262.

8 & 9 *Chingleput District and Madras City* (Madras, 1965), p. 3; p.154 respectively.

10 & 11 *Madurai and Ramanathapuram*, (Madras, 1969.) p. 5; p. 188 respectively.

TABLE II

Temple dedicated to the principal Hindu gods

Name of District	Number of temples	Brahman priests	non-Brahman priests
1. Tanjavur	1,382	1,343	39
2. Coimbatore	554	431	123
3. Salem	550	401	149
4. North Arcot	391	352	39
5. Tirunelveli	456	418	38
6. Tiruchirapalli	742	698	44
7. South Arcot	543	507	36
8. Chingleput	469	453	16
9. Madras City	118	110	8
10. Madurai	227	168	59
11. Ramanathapuram	283	270	13
Total	5,715	5,151	564

Of the 5,715 temples, Brahman officiate in 5,151 temples while in the remaining 564 temples non-Brahmans discharge priestly duties.[1] Most of these temples look after the basic needs of their priests by providing them with free residential quarters, rice and grain and other monetary benefits. In addition, they receive small sums of money as voluntary gifts from the devotees who visit the temples. Altogether the temple priests would get the minimum requirements

[1] A temple may have one or more priests depending on the popularity of the shrine. In Tanjore district a single priest officiates in 2 or 3 small temples. The temples in which the non-Brahmans officiate as priests are said to have been very insignificant ones.

to run their families.[1] This the Self-Respecters argued would not be possible for a labourer who toiled eight hours a day in the field.[2]

The Self-Respecters contended that although the Brahman *purohitas*' profession might not be very lucrative, they obtained their basic needs by performing religious rites and ceremonies for non-Brahmans. The Appendix 2 indicates the various items of provisions a *purohita* would receive from a middle class non-Brahman family by performing a *sraddha* or rite to commemorate the anniversary of the death of a family member.

The Self-Respecters considered that the religious institutions and the many Hindu religious rites conducted by Brahmans were permanent sources of unearned income. Since the sacerdotal way of living was sanctioned in the Hindu law books as the special prerogative of Brahmans, the Self-Respecters questioned the propriety of such laws and the very necessity of the Hindu temples. To prevent non-Brahmans from spending their money in temple worship and to deny the priestly class of Brahmans their traditional vocation, the Self-Respecters passed a resolution calling on non-Brahmans to refrain from spending any money on worship in

---

1 Interview with the priests officiating in the following temples: Nacciyar Koil, Tirukkannamangai, Tiruccerai and Tirunakeswaram in Tanjore district; Meenakshi temple and Tirrupparankuntram in Madura district; Tirupporur and Ekambaranathar Koil in Chingleput district, Ranganathar temple at Srirangam in Trichinopoly district. 10,22 and 29 April and 6 May 1969, respectively. A tenth century inscription issued during the period of the Cola King Parantaka I (907-955) indicates that a Brahman priest officiating in a temple was provided daily with the following items: Polished rice-5 lbs, three varieties of vegetables, curd 2½ lbs, ghee 4 ozs and betel leaves and nuts. *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. III, part III, No, 106, quoted in V. Sundaresa Vandaiyar, *Kalvettu* (Madras, 1958), p. 11.

2 Interview with Ramasami Naicker on 1 June 1969 and Vedachalam on 27 July 1969.

temples, to reject the services of priests[1] and to cease building new temples. The resolution also advocated that the income of the existing temples should not be spent on celebrating festivals but should be utilized for promoting technological studies, vocational education, industrial research and educating the masses in public health and general hygiene. The text of the resolution is as follows:

(a) This Conference is of opinion that not a single pie or a single pie's worth of material should be used in the cause of worship in the temples or elsewhere in the name of God, and that no priest or intermediary between the worshipper and the worshipped should be employed.

(b) This Conference is of opinion that no temple ought to be erected hereafter and that the income of and the properties of the existing temples and mutts should be utilized for the promotion of technological studies, vocational education and industrial research.

(c) This Conference is of opinion that the celebration of festivals in temples ought to be immediately put a stop to, and, in their stead, should be organized exhibitions for the dissemination of knowledge among the people of such subjects as sanitation, public health, etc.[2]

---

1 True to the spirit of the resolution the Self-Respecters refrained from going to temples, rejected the priestly authority and even conducted marriages without the help of Brahman priests. In such Self-Respect marriages an elderly person or a local dignitary will conduct the function without any religious rituals that normally go with the Hindu marriages. The bride and the bridegroom in the presence of their parents, relatives and friends will usually exchange flower garlands on expressing their willingness to become husband and wife and remain equal partners in life. In such marriages the tying of the *tali* (a yellow thread tied with a gold ornament to indicate that a woman is married) around the neck of the bride is optional, wheras it is obligatory in the traditional form of marriages. The Self-Respecters considered that the *tali* was a symbol of the eternal slavery of women and so they gave up the custom in their marriages. Kunchitam Gurusami, the most powerful woman speaker in the movement, claimed that between 1929 and 1932 more than 8,000 Self-Respect marriages were celebrated in the Tamil districts. *Kudi Arasu*, 20 December 1931 and 26 June 1932. These Self-Respect marriages still take place.

2 T. A. V. Nathan (ed.), *The Justice Year Book* 1929, p. 131.

The Justice leaders attending the conference bitterly criticized this resolution calling for sanctions against Hindu temples. T. Varadarajulu Naidu, said that even if new temples were not built, the existing ones needed money for their upkeep from their willing devotees and to dissuade them from contributing to such necessities would be highly improper. So he called for the amendment of part (a) of the resolution to allow devotees to make offerings in temples.[1] The amendment was supported by K. V. Menon, who said that although he agreed with the suggestion that the services of the intermediary between the worshipper and the worshipped had to be dispensed with he could neither support nor subscribe to the aims of the resolution unless it was amended suitably. Therefore, he moved another amendment to part (b) of the resolution to read as

> only such amount as remained surplus after meeting the legitimate minimum requirements of the temples concerned, should be utilized for the promotion of technological studies, vocational education and industrial research.[2]

Further he warned that unless Ramasami Naicker and others of his line of thinking, obtained a mandate from the people, the passing of such a radical resolution at the conference would be useless.[3] However, the original resolution without any amendments was passed with an overwhelming majority, because the conference was dominated by the followers of Ramasami Naicker.[4]

If the foregoing resolutions had shown the revolutionary message and the programme of the movement, what its political stand would be in the future was indicated by Ramasami Naicker's resolution on the Statutory Commission on Constitutional Reforms headed by Sir John Simon. The Commission which came to India on 3 February 1928 to report on the workings of the Government Act of 1919 and to prepare the future constitution of India, was boycotted by the Indian National Congress and other major political parties for the primary reason that Indians were kept out of it. It was felt by a large section of Indian politicians that the British

---

1 Ibid., p. 131.

2 Ibid., pp. 132-33.

3 Ibid., p. 133.

4 T. A. V. Nathan (ed.), *The Justice Year Book*, p. 134.

Government in constituting the Commission without a single Indian among its members wounded the national self-esteem. But the British Government pointed out the impossibility of appointing representatives of the various communities in India in view of their mutually conflicting opinions and interests. Ramasami Naicker in his resolution supported the reasons advanced by the British Raj for the non-inclusion of Indians in the Commission, criticized the 'boycott tactics' of the Indian National Congress and advocated that there was nothing

> specially derogatory to national self-respect in tendering evidence before the Commission, in as much as the Commission has been appointed by the British Parliament, whose legal suzerainty over India and whose governance and administration of this country's affairs have been actively acquiesced in and helped by every political party in the country.[1]

The initial reaction to the resolutions passed at the Self-Respect conference came from the non-Brahman leaders in the TNCC who attached great political significance to Ramasami Naicker's unqualified support to the Simon Commission. Their immediate concern was not with the contents of the resolution but with the identity of views between the political parties opposed to the Congress and the Self-Respect movement. The Congress leaders considered this a new political development and a challenge to the Congress in view of the elections scheduled for 1930. To combat their combined propaganda and to expose the atheistic ideas of the Self-Respect movement, M. Bhaktavatsalam, a member of the TNCC, charged the opposition parties, chiefly the Justice Party, with encouraging anti-religious activities in the country by identifying themselves with the ideologies of the Self-Respect movement. He also criticized the resolution on temple worship as 'absurd and ridiculous' and called on the Justice leaders to denounce the atheistic character of the Self-Respect movement, as otherwise the Congress would make this an issue at the time of the elections.[2] This triggered off a series of protests in the vernacular press supporting the Congress. One paper, *Desabandhu*, called upon the government either to take immediate steps to curb the irreligious activities

---

1 Ibid., p. 124.

2 *Daily Express*, 10 March 1929, quoted in the *Revolt*, 20 March 1929.

of the movement or leave the responsibility of containing its activities to the members of Congress.[1] The *Tamil Nadu* said that some of the resolutions adopted at the conference were indicative of the political immaturity of the Self-Respecters and their lack of understanding of the cultural traditions of the people.[2]

If the Congress was actuated by political considerations in denouncing the Self-Respect movement, some non-Brahman leaders belonging to the Vellala and Pillai communities also attacked it, lest their cultural and religious way of life should be blotted out of existence. The former was largely confined to North Arcot and Chingleput districts and the latter to Tinnevelly and Tanjore districts. They held a high ritual status and were first among the non-Brahman communities to benefit from a knowledge of English. Since they were also deeply religious and highly sanskritized in their style of life, they viewed the Self-Respecters' resolutions and vitriolic attack on Śaivism, Śaivite restrictions on temple entry and Śaivite reluctance to abandon the services of the priestly class of Brahmans in the temples as a sign of slipping away from the traditional way of religious life. To counter the activities of the Self-Respecters, the Śaiva Vellalas organized religious conferences in different districts to explain to the masses the basic concepts of Śaivism. Through such conferences they achieved a large measure of success in reviving the religious spirit among the common people and instilling in them the fundamentals of Śaivism. Of the many conferences they organized in 1929, the Tinnevelly Śaiva Śiddhānta Conference held on 29 March is worth citing because it was here that the Śaivites took the sting out of the Self-Respecters' criticism by accepting in principle the untouchables' right to enter any Śaiva temple provided they adhered to the concepts of Śaivism and practised vegetarianism in their daily life. At the same conference it was decided to admit converts also to Śaivism 'under a specified declaration and costless ceremony.'[3] The Śaiva leaders also pointed out that the Self-Respecters' attack on Śaivism betrayed their ignorance, that Śaiva Śiddhānta philosophy would satisfy

[1] *Ms. NNR.* 1929.

[2] *Tamil Nadu*, 15 March 1929.

[3] *Tirunelveli Saiva Siddhanta Conference Malar* (Tinnevelly, 1929), p. 98. See also *Revolt*, 10 April 1929.

any enquiry of modern minds,[1] and that any criticism of religious practice should be made after a thorough study. At that conference they appealed to the government to put an end to the atheistic activities in the province.[2]

The Śaivites were not alone when they challenged criticism of the Hindu religion by the Self-Respecters. The orthodox Brahmans' concern to stall the spread of atheism and their anxiety to preserve the traditional values were apparent when they convened a series of conferences on behalf of Varnashrama and Āstiga Sangams in 1929 and 1930. In April 1929, for example, at a Āstiga Sangam conference held at Madras, Brahman leaders not only characterized the movement as irresponsible but also charged the Subbarayan Ministry with encouraging and abetting an atheistic movement in the presidency.[3] At a Varnashrama Sangam conference held at Kumbakonam on 31 May 1930 Brahman leaders instead of condemning the Self-Respecters out-right appealed to their community members to probe into the causes of the spread of atheism and hatred of Brahmanism in the country, instead of denouncing those who had been propagating them. They reasoned that when the Brahmans abandoned their noble ideals of plain living and high thinking, of service and sacrifice, in favour of competing with other communities for material benefits and prestige of office it resulted in the emergence of anti-Brahman and anti-religious movements.[4] To forestall the spread of atheism and anti-Brahmanism as a cult in the South, Brahmans should return to the actual living of the doctrines of Vedantic philosophy, according to which they should scrupulously lead an austere and religious life. This bold evaluation of the situation can be seen from the presidential address delivered by V. V. Srinivasa Iyengar at the conference.

> it seems to me that it is in the manner and measure in which he (Brahman) has, abandoning his own ideals, sought to compete with the other castes and communities

1 Even before the Conference one Vellala, T. N. Sivagnanam Pillai, reasoned that, in the face of the Self-Respecters' unrelenting attack on Saivism, the philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta would stand the criticial enquiry of modern days and lead men to the righteous path. *Hindu*, 9 March 1929.

2 *Tirunelveli Saiva Siddhanta Conference Malar*, p. 98.

3 *Swadesamitran*, 14 April 1929.

4 *Mail*, and *Hindu*, 31 May 1930.

> not only for means of subsistence, but for the loaves and fishes of office and the offices of power that he has naturally caused in those other castes and communities great irritation, the logical and historical manifestation of which has been the non-Brahman movement in South India.... I feel strongly that if the Brahman should again succeed in regaining in any degree his lost position as a teacher and a leader, he should again set himself to reduce to actual practice his doctrines of Vedantic philosophy.[1]

In spite of this reasoning and evaluation by progressive Brahmans, the organizers of these conferences succeeded in passing resolutions to the contrary, reaffirming their faith in the validity of *varnashrama dharma* and in the sanctions against the scheduled castes. Though this showed their anxiety to preserve and maintain their cultural way of life, it also exposed their unwillingness to see the emergence of an egalitarian Hindu society where differences based purely on birth would be non-existent. This unwillingness became more apparent when they passed resolutions demanding the revocation of all social legislations aimed at rationalizing outmoded customs and practices.

The Self-Respecters did not alter their stance against religion in spite of the stout opposition of the Śaivite non-Brahmans and the orthodox Brahmans. Instead they viewed the Śaivite propaganda against 'an enlightened movement' organized for uplifting non-Brahmans as due to the moral support given by the orthodox Brahmans through the written and spoken word. What the Brahmans did in their Āstiga and Varnashrama associations was no more than to appeal to the orthodox Hindus to save the traditional religion and customs from being reformed out of existence. But the Self-Respecters contended that, although Brahmans had not openly censured the movement, their deft hand could be seen in the way they ignited the sparks of opposition in the elite non-Brahman communities.

K. M. Balasubramaniam, himself a Vellala, was the first to give currency to the idea that the orthodox Brahmans were behind the Vellalas in their attack on the Self-Respect movement. In his article entitled, 'Temple Entry in the Tamil Country', he said:

---

1 *Mail*, 31 May 1930.

> I must confess to a feeling of unmixed horror and indignation at the fact that it is the non-Brahmans (Vellalas) that prove to be the most inveterate and unbending opponents to this enlightened movement .... I can quite understand if monopolists (Brahmans) were to oppose it. But I am simply scandalized to see opposition emanate from a non-Brahman. Verily the slave mentality has become too much deep rooted in our breasts, and nothing can be a better tribute to the machination and ingenuity of the priestly class than that they are able to remain at the background and ignite the sparks of opposition in the non Brahmans themselves. It is to this incurable disease of self extinction that the efficacious panacea of Self-Respect ought to be administered.[1]

This view seems to have been very popular among the Self-Respecters because P. Chidambaram Pillai in his serial articles in the *Ravolt* entitled, 'Śaivism: An Exposure' and 'Śaivite Mentality and Self-Respect', suggested to the Brahmans and the Vellalas that they should pool their resources to fight the movement instead of working together clandestinely. He reminded them of the Smarta-Śaivite alliance under the aegis of Saint Tirunavukkarasar and Gnanasambandar which contributed to the extinction of Jainism and Buddhism and the emergence of the 'neo-Śaivism, violent political Brahmino Śaivism'[2] in South India. He also maintained that the establishment of Śaivism had been possible only with the aid of the gibbet and by persecuting the Jains mercilessly. Pillai warned that if the treachery or a Vellala Tirunavukkarasar[3] contributed to the downfall of Jainism, the same Vellala community should not shoulder the blame for the eclipse of the Self-Respect movement by working in collusion with Brahmans. Instead he wanted the Vellalas, chiefly the educated youths, to join the ranks of the movement in order to remove the barriers of caste, religion and sex—the three great barriers to non-Brahman's progress.[4]

---

1 *Revolt*, 30 June 1929.

2 *Revolt*, 8 September 1929.

3 *See Appendix* 3.

4 *Revolt*, 22 September 1929. Immediately after the Chingleput conference, the Self-Respecters directed their attack on the Vellalas. The intensity of their attack can be seen from the articles written by P. Chidambaram Pillai, a Vellala himself, in the *Revolt* from 1 May to 1 September 1929.

The Self-Respecters' attitude to orthodox religion was viewed from an altogether different angle by some of the Justice Party leaders and the enlightened followers of Ramasami Naicker. They did not read the resolutions literally as others had done previously, but considered only the spirit in which they were adopted. They believed that those provocative resolutions would at least make the orthodox people come out of their snobbishness and make them realize the necessity of re-evaluating the Hindu religious system so that it could face the challenges posed by the enquiring minds in the light of changing social conditions. Ramasami Mudaliar, who himself had expressed his disagreement at the conference over the controversial resolutions on temple worship, in a speech at the Gokhale Hall said:

> the leaders of the Self-Respect movement have done their task; they have increased the literature over this question of temple worship and temple entry; they have driven you to examine the whole position; they have made you realize that your religious system wants an examination and while you were sleeping the need has arisen—if need be—even to combat the Self-Respect propaganda, that you should come forward with your views, with your ideas, with your facts of the religious and social system in the country. That I believe had been the result of their activities.[1]

Guruswami contended that, although the resolution on temple worship was sternly worded, its primary aim was to make the religious leaders realize that a weed-like growth of rites, rituals, ceremonials and intermediaries had developed around the Hindu religion and that clearing work had to be undertaken to restore it to its former glory.[2]

Their line of reasoning was in no way borne out by the continued militant posture taken by the movement against the institution of religion. The heads of religious institutions were also shocked, but none took any action to stem its activity except Sankaracharya Swami of the Sringeri *math.* He thought that some dialogue should be held with Naicker in order to tone down

1 *Revolt*, 1 May 1929.
2 *Revolt*, 10 April 1929.

his criticisms and to understand the real meaning and purpose of the movement. Accordingly a personal letter was written to Ramasami Naicker, inviting him to visit Sringeri for a discussion concerning the different aspects of Hindu religion. In his letter Sankaracharya also indicated that he would be able to support the ideologies of the Self-Respect movement provided they conformed to the basic tenets of the Hindu shastras. Naicker published this letter in *Kudi Arasu* on 2 March 1930, expressing his doubts as to the usefulness of such a meeting. Nevertheless he called for the considered views of his followers as well. They felt that since Sankaracharya would base his arguments on the shastras, which were anathema to Naicker, there existed no common ground for conversation, and that if it took place one would try to convert the other to his views. As expected, the meeting did not take place.[1]

Although none of the heads of the religious institutions were able to have a rapport with Ramasami Naicker and alter his posture against the Hindu Religion, the weight of public opinion in Tamilnad did have a moderating effect on some of the leading supporters of the movement. This became increasingly clear from 1930 onwards. At the Second Madras Provincial Self-Respect Conference in May 1930 Subbarayan, in sharp contrast to his attitude of the previous year, avoided all controversies and emphasized only the social reform plank of the movement. His whole speech created the impression that he was anxious to clear all misunderstandings that had risen over his speech in the 1929 Chingleput conference rather than defend the atheistic content of the Self-Respect ideology. He reasoned in his speech at the second conference that as an ardent theist he would not have any truck with a movement which preached atheism openly and denied religion.[2] Shanmugam Chettiar in his address of welcome said that although some of the resolutions passed at the previous conference had given the impression that the movement was against all religious institutions, its cardinal aim was to liberate the common man from the avaricious priestly class and to educate him on the futility of propitiating God by material

1 Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, p. 116.

2 *Hindu*, 11 May 1930; *Mail*, 12 May 1930.

offerings. Further, he said that the protagonists of the movement did criticize religion not because they were wedded to atheism but because the orthodox Hindus urged the sanction of religion for the perpetuation of all unjust laws and objectionable customs.[1] In spite of his defence of the movement, he took considerable pains to emphasize its non-atheistic character and this came out distinctly when he declared, that 'it has never been and never will be the aim of our movement to preach the doctrine of atheism.'[2] Again, at a subsequent meeting held at Madura in April 1931, Shanmugam Chettiar did not discuss whether or not atheism was the guiding principle of the movement, but stoutly supported its reform programme.[3] However his exposition of the Self-Respect ideology was neither supported nor denied by the Self-Respecters, though they often betrayed their atheistic orientation by their indiscriminate attack on religion. Notwithstanding this Shanmugam Chettiar presided over the Virudhunagar conference in August the same year. At this conference when a resolution calling for the destruction of all religions was moved, he was so outraged and disgusted by the prevailing anti-religious mood among the vast majority of the delegates that he abruptly left the conference in the middle of the proceedings. With this, his association with the Self-Respect movement ceased. A few other non-Brahmans of Shanmugam Chettiar's stature left the movement for good.

This does not, however, prove that the elite of the non-Brahmans disagreed with the aims of the Self-Respect movement or for what Naicker stood and advocated. But on the other hand

1 *Mail* and *Hindu*, 10 May 1930.

2 *Mail* and *Hindu*, 10 May 1930. Commenting on the welcome address of Shanmugam Chettiar, *Mail* said that the cardinal principle of the Self-Respect movement might be 'unassailable' but the general attitude of the champions of the movement caused anxiety, if not horror in the minds of the people. The anxiety was further accentuated by the adoption of resolutions which ran counter to the religious beliefs of the people. If Shanmugam Chettiar assured that such resolutions were not a negation of God, then the positive approach should be to urge the people themselves to purge the evils in the Hindu temples by developing their own character. Instead 'to adopt the popular and two-edged slogan of boycott' would be tantamount to the assailing of the very foundations of Hinduism. *Mail*, 10 May 1930.

3 *Hindu*, 10 April 1931.

the participation of the Justicites, the Ministerialists and even some Congressmen in the Chingleput Self-Respect conference proves that an important section of non-Brahmans, despite political and other differences, was unanimous in supporting the social aims of the movement. Naicker's appeal to non-Brahmans to relinquish caste titles, to repudiate the concepts of purity and pollution attached to the caste system, to afford equal status to women in all sphere, to discard the services of ritualists in social ceremonies and to appraise radically some of the then prevalent traditions in Tamil society, found support among many non-Brahman intellectuals. Nevertheless, a majority of them spurned his call to renounce religious belief and worship as negative, and castigated him for spreading blatant atheism among the people. This atheistic image of the Self-Respect movement from its inception, was one of the main reasons for Naicker's limited success, even in the social sphere. In politics too he failed to achieve any worthwhile success, for his stand on current issues of his time was nebulous and lacked proper evaluation of the political situation in the country. And this is made plain to us during the years 1927-34.

III

Although Naicker had become disenchanted with the Congress since the Kanchipuram conference in 1925, he had no specific plans for his future political activities in the country. Undoubtedly he was concerned with the political viability of the Justice Party, because of the growing dissensions among its leaders, extreme misuse of power, patronage politics and authoritarian attitude of its leaders. But Naicker was not prepared to risk his own political reputation by supporting the Justice Party at this juncture. Nor were the Justice leaders very keen to take him into their fold. Ideological and personal differences with Srinivasa Iyengar prevented him from joining the Swarajist ranks. Besides Naicker had his personal reasons for suspecting that the extremists among Brahmans dominated the Swarajya Party and that its main aim, apart from council entry, was to strengthen the Brahman hold on provincial politics.[1] At this time, though Naicker was not an admirer of the political aspirations of the Justicites, he suppor-

1 Interview with Ramasami Naicker on 1 June 1969.

ted their efforts to improve the general status of non-Brahmans in the country. This was one of the reasons that prevented Naicker from joining the Swarajya Party. With the Congress, the Swarajya and the Justice excluded from his list, he had no other party left in the country to join. The Ministerial Party with its 37 members in the Madras council was no doubt a force to be reckoned with but it had no common programme or policy of its own. Thus for Naicker the Ministerial Party had no attraction.

Naicker's misgivings about the Tamilnad Congress and his disinclination to join other political parties became evident at the legislative council election of 1926. The TNCC in pursuance of its old policy of non-cooperation decided to boycott the elections. The Swarajya Party, consistent with its policy of council entry decided to contest the elections. So did the Ministerial Party. Though the TNCC decided to boycott the elections, its members stealthily supported the Swarajists and in some cases, openly canvassed for them. Naicker being still a member of the TNCC had the option of either opposing or welcoming council entry. He did neither. Instead he urged the voters through the columns of *Kudi Arasu* to vote for competent candidates, presumably non-Brahman candidates, who would be willing to sacrifice personal interests to serve the non-Brahman cause.[1] Though this stand was rather unexpected at this stage, it shows Naicker's gradual leanings towards a policy smacking of communalism.

The results of the elections reflected the then existing political aspirations of the people. Politically oriented non-Brahmans were undoubtedly for obtaining certain safeguards for their communities. Yet they realized that their immediate concern should be to obtain political independence for the country. With this end in view, they urged non-Brahmans to vote the nationalists to power. This appeal together with superior electioneering tactics based on a sound programme enabled the Swarajists to emerge as a political power in Tamilnad politics. As many as 41 out of 98 elected seats in the council went to them.[2] Perhaps

---

1 Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, p. 95.

2 Great Britain, *Indian Statutory Commission, Vol. VI, Memorandum Submitted by the Government of Madras to the Indian Statutory Commission* (London, 1930), p. 17.

those non-Brahmans dissatisfied with the Justicites, and the Swarajists had voted for the Ministerialists. This accounted for the Ministerialists' 36 seats in the council. The Justicites retained only 21 seats, less than half of what they had in the second council.[1]

The election results were not too disappointing for Naicker. At least his statements after the elections in *Kudi Arasu* confirm this view. His editorials in the same paper also strengthen the view that he expected the defeat of the Justicites. In the December issue of *Kudi Arasu*, Naicker wrote 'we had warned the Justicites time and again in our columns to mend their differences and to work unitedly for improving the conditions of non-Brahman communities. But they disregarded our timely warnings and are now engaged in a futile post-mortem to find out the causes for their election defeat. The Swarajists' phenomenal success was the result of the Justicites' lack of cohesiveness and earnestness of purpose'*[2] Despite this evaluation, Naicker was not happy over the prospect of Swarajists ruling the province, for he viewed that their rule would give rise to Brahman oligarchy. His fears were unfounded, because the Swarajists declined office while the Ministerialists led by Subbarayan accepted the Governor's invitation to form a ministry.

The press was critical of the Governor's action in inviting Subbarayan to form a ministry. It contended that the Governor's action was in contravention of the standards he had laid down soon after assumption of office as Governor in April 1924 and again, while dissolving the second Madras legislative council in December 1926. On both these occasions he had said that parties with definite political principles alone should be invested with powers to run democratic forms of government.[3] But when he called upon the Ministerialists to form the ministry this norm was not upheld. For the Ministerialists neither belonged to an established political party nor subscribed to any common political ideology. They were a group of individuals eager to make political capital out of the prevailing situation. Formerly there were anti-Ministerialists, opposed to the Justice Party in power.

---

1 Ibid., p. 17.

2 **Kudi Arasu*, 28 December 1926.

3 *Swadesamitran*, 28 March 1929; *Ms. NNR*. 1930, pp. 473-74.

The absence of a common political programme among them caused severe strains when they formed the ministry in December 1926 and the result was a split in the ministry over the question of cooperation or not with the Simon Commission in 1927.[1] In calling the Ministerialists, though the Governor infringed his own standards, had no other alternative but to find cooperators to run the dyarchic form of government. In doing this he identified himself with bureaucracy and succeeded in finding cooperators who would be willing to form the Ministry and at the same time be acceptable to a large majority of the electorate. The choice of Subbarayan as the First Minister was approved even by a section of the hostile press because of his suavity of manners and his Oxford education. Above all he commanded a large measure of support within the council, including the Swarajists, at least in the initial stages.[2] Naicker's yardstick of evaluation for supporting Subbarayan's ministry was however different. He saw in Subbarayan a former Justicite, a reformer and a progressive. Therefore Naicker commended the Government's sense of parliamentary democracy in inviting the Ministerialists to form a Ministry.[3]

Naicker's support of the Governor's action and his approval of the Subbarayan Ministry through his writings in *Kudi Arasu* indicate his change of attitude towards British bureaucracy. His political views no doubt had been undergoing a change since 1925 from a political radicalism of the Congress to a political liberalism. The first obvious indications of this change came in the form of support for the Governor in 1926. It was also shown in Naicker's pro-British attitude. This change of political attitude was partly responsible for his increased interest in the activities of the Justice Party. Partly it may also be regarded as his initial assessment of the willingness of the Justicites to incorporate his social views in their own programme. He attended the Justice conferences held at Madura in December 1926, at Mayavaram in May 1927 and at Coimbatore in July the same year and followed the proceedings closely to evaluate the Justicites' attitude to the changing political scene in the country. Naicker

1 Great Britain, *Indian Statutory Commission*, Vol. VI, pp. 150-51.

2 *Swadesamitran*, 2 January 1927.

3 *Kudi Arasu*, 9 January 1927.

saw the proceedings of the Madura conference as a proof of Justicites' willingness to adopt the symbols and slogans of the Congress in order to retrieve their lost political power in the country. This view is further strengthened by the fact that his resolution urging the Justicites to use *khaddar* had an easy passage at the Conference.[1] In the subsequent two conferences he used the Justice platform to denounce the Brahmans. At the Coimbatore conference he made frontal attacks on Brahmans and condemned the Governor for appointing Ramaswami Iyer, as the Law Member of the Executive Council.[2] His attacks on Brahmans were not justifiable and therefore resented by many of the Justicites. It was made probably to keep alive non-Brahman solidarity among the Justicites and to find a niche for himself among the extremists. Naicker's charges against the Governor should be dismissed as an occassional outburst, for the future events reveal that his political stance continued to be pro-British although it was not always pro-bureaucratic.

Both from Naicker's point of view and from an evaluation of political events the year 1927 was a momentous one. Naicker's confrontation with Gandhi over his interpretations of *varnashrama dharma*, led to his ultimate break with the Tamilnad Congress. His initial probings to find out the possibilities of alignment with the Justice Party were not heartening, for its leaders detested his style of politics. This hastened him to strengthen the Self-Respect League which came popularly to be known as the Self-Respect movement. Ostensibly it was to function as a social reform movement but Naicker frequently drew it into the vortex of provincial politics. As the leader of the Self-Respect movement, he pursued a pro-bureaucratic policy, firstly by establishing a cordial relationship with the ruling Ministerialists, especially with Subbarayan, and secondly, by extending his support to British policies in the country. Naicker staunchly supported Subbarayan's ministry on two occasions in 1927. On both these occasions his target of attack was surprisingly the Justicites, for it was they who moved motions of no confidence against the

1 Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, p. 98.

2 T. V. Kalyanasundaranar, *Tiru. Vi. Ka. Valkkaikkurippukkal*, p. 393; Eugene F. Irschick, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India*, pp. 317-18; Interview with Ramasami Naicker on 1 June 1969.

Ministerialists, first in March 1927 and second in August of the same year. The intention of the Justicites was obvious when they brought in a cut motion though not a formal vote of no confidence regarding excise demand.[1] The Swarajists in order to prevent the Justicites from returning to power refrained from voting and the motion was defeated by 41 votes.[2] On the second occasion in August 1927, though it was a formal vote of no confidence against the ministry, it met the same fate as the previous one.[3] On both these occasions Naicker not merely criticized the Justicites for their acrimonious attitude towards Subbarayan's ministry but also urged the non-Brahman politicians to forget their political differences and to support the non-Brahman ministry in office in the larger interest of the community.[4] One is inclined to conclude from Naicker's speeches and writings that his mission throughout the late 1920's was to unite all non-Brahman leaders, if possible under one banner, so that they could work unitedly and achieve greater benefits, if the British conceded power to provincial leaders. He succeeded in doing this, in some measure, when he convened the first Self-Respect conference in 1929. Many non-Brahman political leaders participated in this conference, but the sense of unity that emerged there was soon last.

During the later part of 1927, Naicker's pro-bureaucracy stand came in for severe test because of his involvement in trade union activities. Partly to spread the Self-Respect ideology and partly to establish a rapport with the labour leaders opposed to the Indian National Congress, Naicker showed increasing interest in the trade union movement during this period. The Madras Labour Union, launched on 27 April 1918, by a group of

---

1 R. V. Krishna Ayyar, *In the Legislature of Those Days* (Madras, 1956), p. 85.

2 Government of Madras, *Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency for the year* 1926-27 (Madras, 1928), p. xi.

3 R. V. Krishna Ayyar, *In the Legislature of Those Days*, p. 85.

4 *Kudi Arasu*, 29 March and 30 August 1927.

nationalist politicians was the first organized trade union in India.[1] The trade union movement in Madras gained momentum with the visit of Saklatwala, a prominent trade union leader and Member of Parliament to Madras in February 1927.[2] At his suggestion many labour organizations such as Peasants and Workers parties and Young Comrade's Leagues were formed. Most of them were leftist unions led by known communist leaders. In April they all merged to form the Labour Political Party of Madras with the avowed object of safeguarding the interests of the proletariat and to secure representation in the Madras Corporation. Its policies were explicitly anti-Congress, for it dubbed the Indian National Congress as the abode of land-lordism, capitalism and private ownership. This new party failed to make any conspicuous impact on the political scene except that it succeeded in gaining representation for labourers in the Madras City Municipal Corporation.[3] The new party was, however, the immediate cause for industrial unrest in the presidency. Workers staged lightning strikes in several industrial establishments and the most important was the strike staged by the workers of the Southern Mahratta and South Indian Railways. The strike started in late 1926, stemmed from a demand for a substantial increase in pay to counter the difficulties caused by the transfer of a workshop from Nagapatam to Golden Rock at Trichinopoly. After much bargaining the company agreed to certain increases in pay but it fell far too short of the worker's demands. Therefore on the advice of local politicians the workers went on strike. The

---

1 B. P. Wadia, *Labour in Madras*, p. 176. It is generally believed that the first labour union in India was started by B. P. Wadia in Madras. But a close study of his book the *Labour in Madras* and the autobiography of T. V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar reveal that the idea of forming a labour union was motivated by nationalist leaders like Kalyanasundara Mudaliar, Kesava Pillai, Selvapathi Chettiar and Ramanjulu Naidu and it was they who invited Wadia to be the president of the Madeas Labour Union. Wadia's work as a labour leader would not have been effective but for the pioneering work of Kalyanasundara Mudaliar and others. Wadia's book *Labour in Madras* is dedicated to Mudaliar himself. E. Sa. Visswanathan, *A Critical Analysis of Tiru. Vi. Ka. Kaliyanasundaram's Works* (Unpublished M. A. thesis submitted to the University of Malaya in March 1965), pp. 221-22.

2 Government of Madras, *Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency for the year* 1926-27, p. xiii.

3 Ibid., p. xiii.

Nationalists, the Communists and Swarajists supported their demands. Many labour unions in the presidency advised its workers to go on strike in sympathy with the Nagapatam workers. Extremists among the workers resorted to violence and anti-social activities such as removing the rails, disconnecting telegraph wires and damaging the railway property. The government cracked down on the workers and took steps to save life and property.[1] When the government stepped in, the politicians quietly withdrew leaving the workers to settle their affairs amicably on their own with the authorities. At this stage Naicker stepped in to lead the strikers to achieve their 'righteous and just demands'. The government immediately arrested Naicker along with other labour leaders who stood behind him such as Iswaran, Mariappan and Subramanian for inciting the workers to continue the strike.[2] However, before they could be formally tried at the court, the First Minister, Subbarayan, intervened and the case against Naicker and others was unconditionally withdrawn.[3] In this industrial dispute neither Naicker nor the railway workers gained anything substantial. Nevertheless, from the point of view of the Self-Respecters, the dispute provided them with an excellent opportunity to establish formal contact with the union leaders. Their role in the Self-Respect movement was one of the causes for its growing leftist leanings and this aspect is discussed later.

Naicker's participation in the industrial dispute shows some ambivalance in his attitude to bureaucracy of this period. He was prepared to abandon his pro-bureaucratic policy whenever it conflicted with his political interests or the general interests of the Self-Respect movement. In this particular case, he saw a flagrant violation of worker's interests by the authorities of the Railway company. He also saw that the government was unjustifiably hard upon the workers. Other politicians had already forsaken them when the government intervened to maintain law and order. This was seen by many politicians including Naicker as an attempt to safeguard the interests of the railway company rather than those of the workers. Naicker joined the strikers

---

1 Government of Madras, *Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency for the year* 1927-28 (Madras, 1929), p. xiii.

2 Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, pp. 103-105.

3 Interview with Ramasami Naicker on 1 June 1969.

to provide them leadership knowing full well that he would incur the wrath of the government. This failed to deter him, for the strike provided him with the opportunity to champion the cause of the workers and at the same time prove his preparedness to defy bureaucracy. Nevertheless, his anti-bureaucratic stance was a temporary one, adopted for a specific purpose and for a particular situation.

Naicker's support of British policies in India became apparent with the announcement of the appointment of the Statutory Commission in early 1928 to enquire into the question of constitutional reforms and to prepare a report. The commission consisted of seven British Parliament members, including Sir John Simon, the chairman. No Indian was included in it. Indian politicians, irrespective of party affiliations, expressed their righteous indignation and profound disappointment at the exclusion of Indians in the Commission and unanimously advocated boycott. S. Srinivasa Iyengar, the then Congress president, averred that the exclusion of Indians from the Commission was undoubtedly an affront to Indian Self-Respect. The spokesman for the Liberals, Tej Bahadur Sapru, favoured boycott of the Commission and said that neither Indian's self-respect nor their sense of duty to the country would permit them to go near the Commission.[1] The voice of protest lifted against the composition of the personnel of the Commission reverberated in Madras too. Allt the party leaders including the Justicites registered their protest. The Justice leader, A Ramaswami Mudaliar, wrote in the party organ, 'no self-respecting individual will place his views before that body, and no association which makes a pretence of representing public opinion will send its delegates to give evidence before that body'.[2] When the opposition grew in volume, the government came out with an explanation for the exclusion of Indians in the Commission. It pointed out the practical difficulties in appointing Indians on the Commission as no Indian would be acceptable to all communities in view of their mutually conflicting interests. Although other political leaders viewed this as an

1 R. C. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III (Calcutta, 1963), pp. 308-10.

2 *Justice*, 27 November 1927; Quoted first by Eugene F. Irschick in his work, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India*, p. 325.

excuse, Naicker tacitly approved the reasons given by the Raj and urged non-Brahman politicians to cooperate with the Commission.[1]

Meanwhile opinion crystallized not only against the composition of the personnel of the Commission but against the very purpose for which it was appointed. The Indian National Congress declared that India should be given the right of self-determination, that no nation had the right to impose a constitution on India or to determine its constitutional progress and that it should be allowed to appoint a constituent assembly in order to frame its own constitution. This meant the virtual boycott of the Commission. To make the boycott successful the Indian National Congress suggested that mass demonstrations should be staged throughout the country on the day of the Statutory Commission's arrival in India, that legislators should not cooperate with the members of the Commission in their enquiries and that the Commission's members should be socially boycotted.[2] The TNCC and the Tamilnad branch of the Swarajya Party conformed to the decisions of the Indian National Congress. Under the leadership of Satyamurti the Simon Boycott Propaganda Committee was formed to carry on an intensive propaganda campaign favouring the boycott of the Commission and to stage a hartal on 3 February and also on the day of the Commission's arrival at Madras. Pamphlets addressed to students, shop-keepers, bus owners, lawyers and businessmen to suspend their work and 'to hoist the national flag and a black flag with boycott inscribed on it' were issued.[3] The Justice Party was in two minds whether or not to cooperate with the Commission. The leaders decided against cooperation with the Commission unless an authoritative declaration was made giving the committees of the legislatures an effective voice in the shaping of the decisions of the Statutory Commission. Other Justicites, although they were a minority, like Sir K. V. Reddi Naidu and Natesa Mudaliar, opposed the Party's stand, seceded from it, formed a new party and condemned

---

1 *Kudi Arasu*, 11 December 1927, T. A. V. Nathan (ed.), *The Justice Year Book*, p. 124; Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, pp. 107-108.

2 R. C. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, p. 310.

3 *NAI., Home Department, Political, File No.* 1/28, 1928, No. 541-1, *Public*, p. 1.

the boycott and hartal. The local branch of the Muslim League was also divided on the boycott issue.[1] Naicker who had been pursuing a loyalist policy warned the Justicites in his editorials in *Kudi Arasu* not to be carried away by the agitational tactics of the Congressmen and urged the former to extend full cooperation to make the commission's work successful in Madras. Further he characterized the Congress boycott of the Commission as a struggle between Brahmans and non-Brahmans and that the Congress Party's moves were inimical to non-Brahman's political interests,[2] although there was little evidence in support of his views.

The Madras Legislative Council decided overwhelmingly against cooperation with the Simon Commission on 25 January 1928. Subbarayan's ministry was split over this question resulting in the resignation of the second and the third ministers. The Chief Minister was indecisive while his two cabinet colleagues, A. Ranganatha Mudaliar and R. N. Arogyaswami Mudaliar were for the boycott of the Statutory Commission.[3] The Swarajists were jubilant over the council's decision to boycott the Commission.[4] But the Self-Respecters and Naicker criticized Subbarayan's colleagues for breaking parliamentary conventions and pursuing obstructive policies within the council by refraining from voting against the boycott resolution.[5] In the meantime on the Governor's advice, Subbarayan decided to cooperate with the Statutory Commission. The Swarajists stoutly opposed this decision and on 2 March 1928 attempted to move a vote of no confidence in him. Although their attempts failed,[6] Naicker did not spare them and consistently criticized them in the press as obstructionists, whose main aim was to paralyze democratic practices in the country.[7]

---

1 Ibid., p. 1.

2 Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, p. 108.

3 Great Britain, *Indian Statutory Commission*, Vol. VI, p. 151.

4 *NAI., Home Department, Political, File No.* 1/28, 1928, *No.* 541-1, *Public* p. 1; Government of Madras, *Report of the Administration of the Madras Presidency for the year* 1927-28, p. xii.

5 *Kudi Arasu*, 11 March 1928.

6 Government of Madras, *Report of the Administration of the Madras Presidency for the year* 1927-28, p. xii.

7 *Kudi Arasu*, 18 and 25 March 1928.

Naicker's support for British bureaucracy and the Ministerialists increased after the unsuccessful attempts to move a motion of no confidence against Subbarayan. This was necessitated by the political climate prevailing in the country. The political leadership of the Tamilnad Congress and the Swarajya Party continued to be in the hands of Brahmans. Though Swami Venkatachalam Chettiar a non-Brahman, had been elected leader in the legislature since January 1927,[1] he had virtually no powers to take policy decisions independently without consulting the Brahman leaders outside the legislature. Only they possessed influence at the all-India level and their views were eagerly sought after. In the legislature itself Satyamurti overshadowed Venkatachalam Chettiar by his oratorical abilities and enjoyed a greater influence than Chettiar. When the Swarajya Party became intransigent over Subbarayan's stand on the Statutory Commission, it withdrew its earlier support. Naicker viewed it as a Brahman attempt to usurp non-Brahman's political power, though at this stage this was inconceivable. The Justicites who had been vehemently opposed to Subbarayan, now lent their support, partly because Justicites like Diwan Bahadur Krishnan Nayar were distributed with political favours and partly because the Swarajists sympathy for the Ministerialists diminished.[2] As a result Subbarayan was still able to maintain substantial strength within the council. This became evident when the Ministry wanted to elect representative to serve on the Joint Committee to co-operate with the Statutory Commission. The Government required the mandate from the legislative council to select members for the Committee. To obtain this mandate, a motion was moved by the leader of the House on 3 September 1928 seeking permission for the appointment of a Joint Committee to help the Commission. When the motion was discussed the Swarajists held that since the council had already taken a decision against cooperation, the present motion was irrelevant, inadmissible and should not be discussed. The government held quite a different view. It contended that such a motion could still be discussed provided it substantially raised the question as the previous motion. As the council rules were so flexible they could be interpreted equivocally to suit one's own stand.

1 *NAI., Home Department, Political File No.* 32-27, 1927, *No.* 255-1, *Public,* p. 1.

2 *Tamil Nadu,* 19 February 1929; *Ms. NNR,* 1929, p. 288.

However the president of the council without going into the details of the rules held that the motion was valid. Consequently the motion was carried without a division.[1] On the 4th September 1928, a seven-member committee was formed. Its Chairman, Sir A. P. Patro was a former minister for Education and Public Works in the Justice ministries between July 1921 and December 1926.[2] The nationalist press adversely commented upon the proceedings and the decisions of the council on this issue. It also unanimously derided the composition of the Joint Committee as men who had the least support in the country.[3] Naicker not only expressed his unstinted support for the council's decision, but also criticized the Swarajist's objections to discuss the motion on the floor of the legislature. Their objections were not considered in their proper perspective. Nor did he care to make a thorough analysis of the objections before criticizing them. But he welcomed the choice of the members of the Joint Committee, praised the members on the Committee as men of proven calibre and expressed the hope that they would safeguard non-Brahman interests in their recommendations to the Simon Commission.[4]

The Joint Committee appointed by the Madras Legislative Council to assist the Statutory Commission presented its recommendations in the form of a report to the government in July 1929. The report suggested among other things, provincial autonomy instead of dyarchy at the provincial level and at the centre the grant of responsible government in all the civil departments with the exception of defence, foreign relations, and relations with Indian States.[5] Recommendations were also made that the British Government should accord Dominion status to India within the British Commonwealth of nations in a 'reasonably definite period' and

---

1 R. V. Krishna Ayyar, *In the Legislature of Those Days*, pp. 91-92.

2 Great Britain, *Indian Statutory Commission, Vol.III, Reports of the Committee appointed by the Provincial Legislative Councils to cooperate with the Indian Statutory Commission*, Cmd. 3572 (London, 1930), p. 5.

3 *Swarajya and Andhra Patrika*, 14 June 1929; *Ms. NNR.*, 1929, pp. 824-25 respectively.

4 *Kudi Arasu*, 10 and 17 September 1928.

5 Great Britain, *Indian Statutory Commission, Vol. VI., Report of the Madras Committee*, p. 14.

that its defence forces should be progressively Indianized.[1] Other recommendations favoured the retention of certain overriding powers in the hands of governors of provinces and the viceroy at the centre, the continuation of separate electorates for Muslims and other interest groups and the rejection of the claim for the reorganization of provinces on a linguistic basis as not feasible.[2] The government presented the report to the legislative council in August the same year for its consideration and approval so that the report could be sent to the members of the Statutory Commission. The members of the Swarajya Party in the legislature and some Independents criticized the recommendations of the report as 'narrow recommendations' that failed to satisfy the legitimate and reasonable aspirations of the people.[3] The nationalist press was unanimous in rejecting the Joint Committee's report. It stoutly opposed the continuation of special powers vested in the provincial governors and the viceroy, and the establishment of a second council, as foreign to the concept of provincial autonomy.[4] For example Andhra Patrika wrote on 14 June 1939

> Judged by the suggestions made by the Patro Committee, Swaraj does not seem to be within our easy reach. Meanwhile both in the provinces and in the Central Government, the absolute power of the rulers will remain steady. No progress will be possible at least as regards the eligibility for voting. Distribution of provinces on linguistic basis will not be secured. Communal electorates will continue to exist as at present. We believe that the several political parties in the country will condemn such reforms.[5]

Other newspapers welcomed favourably the recommendations embodied in the report as reasonable and suited to the times. One paper said that the Madras Committee's report was a 'bit more satisfactory' than those of the Auxiliary Committees of the sister

---

1 Ibid., p. 14.

2 Ibid., pp. 18, 21.

3 Government of Madras, *Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency for the year* 1929-30 (Madras, 1931), p. xii.

4 *Swarajya*, 14 June 1929; *Ms. NNR.*, 1929, p. 824.

5 *Ms. NNR.*, 1929, p. 825.

provinces.[1] Another paper expressed satisfaction that its suggestions regarding the transfer of subjects like 'Law' and 'Order' to elected ministers were incorporated in the report.[2] Yet another newspaper commended the provisions of separate electorates and communal representation accorded to the muslims in the province.[3]

Naicker and his followers received the Joint Committee's recommendations with great satisfaction, although they expressed disappointment at its suggestion to discard separate electorates and communal representation for non-Brahmans. Even before this the Self-Respecters had opposed the Motilal Nehru Committee recommendations on the question of communal representation and reservation of seats in the legislatures and passed a resolution rejecting them in toto, at the first Self-Respect conference held in February 1929.[4] The report submitted by the Nehru Committee, did not favour communal representation, but suggested certain guidelines that could be followed where it was deemed necessary. Accordingly for the House of Representatives and the provincial legislatures throughout India joint mixed electorates were proposed, for Punjab and Bengal no reservation of seats was recommended and for the other provinces reservation of seats for minorities on a population basis with the right to contest additional seats was suggested.[5] In the case of Madras, the report of the Joint Committees as well as the Memorandum submitted by the Government of Madras to the Simon Commission both uniformly suggested the abolition of separate electorates for non-Brahmans because it was regarded that non-Brahmans possessed the ability to contest elections successfully and to safeguard their political interests in the province.[6] There is evidence to strengthen the stand taken by the Government of Madras because in all the three provincial legislative council elections the number of the non-Brahmans elected was significant for they represented over 57 per cent whereas Brahmans formed less than 16

1 *Swadeshabhimani*, 7 June 1929; *Ms. NNR.*, 1929, p. 825.

2 *Azad Hind*, 13 June 1929; *Ms. NNR.*, 1929, p. 825.

3 *Saiphul Islam*, 15 June 1929; *Ms. NNR.*, 1929, pp. 824-25.

4 *Namatu Kurikkol*, p. 3.

5 R. C. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, pp. 312-13.

6 Great Britain, *Indian Statutory Commission, Vol. VI*, p. 10. See also *East India Constitutional Reforms: Report of the Indian Central Committee* 1928-29 (London, 1929) Cmd. 3451, p. 47.

per cent of the elected members. This is evident from the following table:

Table III

The composition of each of the three councils of 1920, 1923 *and* 1926 *by race or caste*

Race or Community		1920 Elected	1920 Nominated and Ex-officio	1920 Total	1923 Elected	1923 Nominated and Ex-officio	1923 Total	1926 Elected	1926 Nominated and Ex-officio	1926 Total
Hindus:	Brahmans	17	5	22	13	1	14	18	3	21
	Non-Brahmans	57	8	65	61	8	69	56	10	66
	Depressed classes	—	5	5	—	9	9	—	10	10
Muhammadans		13	1	14	13	1	14	13	1	14
Indian. Christians		5	1	6	5	2	7	5	2	7
European and Anglo-Indians		6	9	15	6	8	14	6	8	14
Total		98	29	127	98	29	127	98	34	132

Source: *Great Britain, Indian Statutory Commission, Vol. VI, Memorandum Submitted by the Government of Madras to the Indian Statutory Commission*, p. 17.

Non-Brahman representation was even more in the case of district boards and municipal councils. In 1922 non-Brahmans represented 71 per cent whereas Brahmans comprised only 19 per cent of the total elected members in the district boards throughout the province. During the same period Brahmans formed 22 per cent while non-Brahman comprised 60 per cent of the total elected numbers to the municipal councils. Five years later in 1927, non-Brahman representation in these two representative bodies increased still further. The non-Brahman community increased its representation from 71 to 80 per cent whereas the Brahman community's representation decreased from 19 to 11 per cent of the total elected members to district boards. The same trend is noticeable in the case of municipal councils , where Brahman representation went down from 22 to 18 whereas non-Brahman representation showed a slight increase from 60 to 62 per cent of the total elected members. The following table illustrates this trend:

Table IV

The extent to which various communities were represented on district boards and municipal councils on 31 December 1922 and 31 December 1927

Community	District Boards		Municipal Councils	
	Elected	Nominated	Elected	Nominated
On 31-12-1922				
Brahmans	132	22	267	20
Non-Brahmans	486	111	739	192
Muhammadans	42	21	138	53
Indian Christians	13	17	57	53
Europeans and Anglo-Indians	10	25	20	43
Depressed Classes	1	23	3	48
Others	—	—	2	2
On 31-12-1927				
Brahmans	78	24	240	22
Non-Brahmans	545	124	813	135
Muhammadans	40	33	171	57
Indian Christians	13	30	47	67
Europeans and Anglo-Indians	8	16	18	47
Depressed Classes	2	22	7	44
Others	1	1	7	11

Source: Great Britan, *Indian Statutory Commission, Vol. VI*, p. 393.

The two tables referred to above indicate that non-Brahman representation was adequate in all types of representative institutions. At the same time the tables draw attention to the large number of Brahmans in these institutions: a number far greater than their percentage in the population of the province. This could be advanced as an argument for the continuation of communal representation in public bodies so that none of the caste groups could

represent more than their percentage in the total population. Naicker in fact advanced this as one of his arguments for the retention of communal representation for non-Brahmans, scheduled castes and others. In addition to this he drew the attention of non-Brahman politicians, who were against reservation of seats, that despite their increase in political power, they were powerless to reduce the Brahman hold on the government administrative machinery. The administrative Report of the Government of Madras for the year 1928-29 substantiates Naicker's claim. The number of government servants from each community in the permanent service on the 1 April 1929, is shown in the following table:

TABLE V

Communal representation in the service of government (1928-29)

Community	Gazetted Officers in permanent appointment	Non-Gazetted officers in permanent appointment on a pay of		
		Rs. 100 and above	Rs. 35 and upwards but below Rs. 100	Less than Rs. 35
Brahmans	620	3,806	10,171	1,296
Non-Brahman Hindus	327	2,127	7,770	34,703
Depressed Classes	—	8	84	1,479
Muhammadans	74	339	1,770	10,929
Non-Asiatics and Anglo-Indians	508	475	101	67
Indian Christians	125	538	1,326	2,386
Others	17	5	22	349

Source: Government of Madras, *Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency for the year* 1929-30 (Madras, 1931), p. 204.

More than 37 per cent of the gazetted officers in permanent appointments were Brahmans. While approximately 20 per cent in the same cadre were non-Brahmans. In the case of non-gazetted officers in permanent appointments on a salary of 100 rupees and above, more than 50 per cent were Brahmans, only 29 per cent were non-Brahmans. The non-Brahman hold in other cadres was equally weak. All these prompted Naicker to argue for the retention of the reservation of seats not only in representative institutions but also in the services of the government.[1]

Naicker's concern for the reservation of seats for non-Brahmans in representative institutions and communal representation in public services was not shared by everyone. In general non-Brahman political leaders were against reservation of seats for majority communities like the non-Brahmans. But a majority of them were not opposed to communal representation in public services because the percentage of non-Brahmans in government services had no relation to their percentage in the total population of the province. Many reasons can be attributed to this state of affairs. The main reason is the lack of higher education among a vast majority of non-Brahman communities and their belated attempts to master English, the language of British administration. Brahmans who had these advantages predominated the government services. To prevent the increase of Brahman concentration in public services, the government issued an order based on the recommendations of the legislative council in September 1921. The Communal Order envisaged that the principle of communal representation should be extended not only to principal appointments but to posts of all grades in public services.[2] In a subsequent order issued by the government, approximately a year later, stipulated that the communal representation principle should be adhered to both at the time of the initial recruitment and at every point at which men were promoted wholly by selection or by seniority.[3] During the time of Subbarayan's ministry further modifications were made in the Government Communal Order. The modified Communal Order contemplated among other things, that out of every twelve

1 *Revolt*, 8 September 1929.

2 MRO., *Public, Ordinary Series, G. O. No.* 613, 16 September 1921.

3 Ibid., *G. O.* 658, 15 August 1922.

vacant posts in the provincial services, five should go to the non-Brahmans, one to the scheduled castes and two each to the Brahmans, the Muhammadans and the Christians including the Eurasians on a rotational basis.[1] But in recruitments to the subordinate services this principle of communal rotation was not followed till Subbarayan's ministry issued a Government Order in July 1929.[2] When Naicker clamoured for special privileges for non-Brahmans in the wake of the publication of the Memorandum forwarded to the Statutory Commission, the members of the Independent Ministry, assured him that non-Brahmans interests would be adequately safeguarded by strictly implementing the principles embodied in the modified Government Order on communal representation in government services. All evidence indicates that both Naicker and his followers were fully satisfied with this assurance and pledged to support the independent Ministry.[3]

In a large measure the Independent Ministry enjoyed the confidence of the Self-Respecters from 1929. One of the important reasons was Subbarayan's participation in the first Self-Respect conference held in February 1929, and his unqualified support for the principles for which the movement stood. Another reason was the personal friendship that existed between Naicker and S. Muthiah Mudaliar, the third minister in Subbarayan's cabinet. He was the chief architect who modified the original Government Order on communal representation which sought to enforce communal rotation in recruitment for subordinate services. Yet another

---

1 MRO., *Public Services, Miscellaneous Series, G. O. No*. 850, 27 May 1935.

2 MRO., *Public, Subordinate Services, G. O. No*. 712, 2 July 1929. 'Provincial Services': On 26 October 1927 the Government decided in Cabinet that in respect of provincial services:—Provided that qualified men are available in each service theproportion in making appointments in future should be, out of every 12 posts, as follows; Non-Brahmans five, Brahmins two, Muhammadans two, Anglo-Indians and Christians two and Depressed classes one. That appointments on the above basis should be made in the following order provided that qualified men could be found in each class. Non-Brahmin one, Muhammadan one, Non-Brahman one, Anglo-Indians and Christians one, Brahmin one, Non-Brahmin one, Depressed classes one, Non-Brahmin one, Muhammadan one, Non-Brahmin one, Anglo-Indians and Christians one, Brahmin one.

3 *Dravidan*, 22 May 1929; *Ms. NNR*., 1929, p. 430; *Kudi Arasu*, 13 April 1930.

reason was the Independent Ministry's conspicuous success in advancing social legislation. In 1929 Subbarayan abolished the system of separate hostels for the Brahmans, the non-Brahmans and the Christian girls studying in Madras city and introduced the common hostel system where caste or religion was no criterion. Likewise hostels for widows were thrown open to all communities by March 1929.[1] Conscious efforts were made to advance social legislations for the removal of restrictions imposed on the scheduled castes in use of roads and temples maintained from public funds and the abolition of the devadasi system. The ministerialists themselves introduced a bill in May 1930 for the removal of untouchability practised in temples maintained from public funds.[2] They also supported S. Muthulakshmi Reddi's anti-Nautch Bill which sought to abolish the custom of dedicating young women to Hindu temples.[3] Subbarayan's other social schemes such as establishing hostels and training centres for widows in various rural centres, offering free books, education and midday meals for all scheduled caste children and founding free boarding schools in important town centres for them were extolled by the Self-Respecters. While the Ministerialists undertook the work of social legislation seriously and carried out reforms, the Self-Respecters built up a formidable public support not only in favour of Subbarayan's ministry but also for furthering social legislation. The high premium Naicker placed on working successfully social amelioration schemes can be assessed by the following extract from the editorial he wrote on 31 March 1929.

> If Subbarayan's schemes were successfully worked then there will not be any necessity for standing for the next election in the name of any party. The election can be fought on principles of social reform. We are confident that social reformers can succeed in the election on the strength of those principles and that they will be in a position to conduct the administration. It should be said that, in social matters in general, our Ministers have done work this time which deserves appreciation.[4]

---

1 *Dravidan*, 8 March 1929; *Ms. NNR.*, 1929, p. 382; *Kudi Arasu*, 31 March 1929; *Ms. NNR.*, 1929, p. 544.

2 *Mail* and *Hindu*, 12 and 13 May 1930 respectively.

3 *Kudi Arasu*, 30 and 4 May 1930.

4 *Ms. NNR.*, 1929, p. 544.

For a brief period Naicker ceased to play the role of chief propagandist favouring social legislation on account of his absence from the country, and due to his involvement in the internal politics of the Justice Party. In December 1929 at the invitation of Malayan Tamils, Naicker visited the Federated States of Malaya. Approximately for two weeks he toured the estate villages, addressed public meetings and propagated ideas of social reform among the South Indian Community. His visit, though brief, created a considerable ferment among them and this led to the launching of the Tamil Reform Association with its headquarters in Singapore and an important branch at Kuala Lumpur. This Association 'espoused with greater ardour the ideals of Naicker's Self-Respect movement' and vigorously agitated for the removal of caste disabilities of the untouchables, rejection of Brahmanical rituals at marriages and funerals. The Self-Respect reform marriages, inter-caste marriages and marriages of widows were popularized. During Naicker's visit an All-Malaya convention was held at Ipoh in which Naicker participated and urged the Tamils to work unitedly in order to retrieve themselves from their abject position in Indian Society. Thereafter, this type of Tamil conventions became an annual feature. The summary effect of Naicker's visit was the reorientation of the Malayan Tamils thinking 'from a commitment to pan Indian nationalism to a consciousness of Tamil separatism'.[1]

On returning from the Federated States of Malaya, Naicker's attention was drawn to the internal politics of the Justice Party and the civil disobedience campaigns of the Indian National Congress. His immediate concern, however, was the Justice Party. Since 1928 he had been involved, not only with the internal politics of the Justice Party, but with its Tamil weekly, *Dravidan*. The then leader of the party, the Raja of Panagal, leased the Tamil weekly to Naicker and asked him to run it in support of Justice policies.[2] Under Naicker the paper increased its circulation, but it ceased to reflect the official views of the Justice Party. Increasingly the paper mirrored his own political views and the general tone of the

---

[1] S. Arasarathnam, *Indians in Malaysia and Singapore* (London, 1970), pp. 127 and 129; Ampalavanar Rajeswary, *Social and Political Developments in the Indian Community of Malaya* 1920-41 (Unpublished M. A. thesis submitted to the University of Malaya in January 1969), pp. 47-48.

[2] *Mail*, 24 September 1930.

paper was also disappointing to the orthodox Justicites. Senior party members hesitated to intervene for want of a more suitable person to run the paper. They felt it would not be wise to antagonize Naicker on the eve of elections.[1] With the death of the Raja of Panagal in December 1928, Naicker gained full independence in the running of the vernacular paper.

The Justice Party was torn by petty factions after the Raja's death. The Raja of Bobbili, Kumararaja Muthiah Chettiar of Chettinad and P. T. Rajan were the chief contestants for the party leadership.[2] The party was threatened with disintegration as none of the contestants was prepared to renounce his claim in favour of another, Subbarayan and Naicker intervened to resolve their differences. Subbarayan who had an eye on Justice leadership offered financial support to the party organs and other forms of assistance provided the party constitution was changed to admit Brahmans, at least into the council section of the party. The executive Committee of the Justice Party accepted the suggestion and recommended it to the party convention to be held in October 1929.[3] But at the convention Rajan, supported by the Self-Respecters, succeeded in defeating the executive committee's recommendation.[4] Naicker's personal stance on this issue is not clear. Some claim that his role was nebulous. He might have initially supported Subbarayan's suggestion but later under pressure from his followers altered his stand.[5] Whatever might be the truth, for personal considerations and for thwarting Subbarayan's bid for leadership, Rajan defeated the recommendation. In turn Subbarayan in collusion with the zamindari clique frustrated Rajan's ambition to gain party leadership.[6] After this squabble at the convention the mantle of leadership fell on Dewan Bahadur B. Muniswamy Naidu.[7]

---

1 Ibid., 24 September 1930.

2 *Mail*, 12 March 1930; Interview with Vedachalam on 27 July 1969.

3 *Mail*, 12 March 1930.

4 Interviews with Ramasami Naicker and Vedachalam on 1 June and 27 July 1969 respectively.

5 Interview with Vedachalam on 27 July 1969.

6 Interviews with Ramasami Naicker and Vedachalam on 1 June and 27 July 1969 respectively.

7 *Mail*, 12 March 1930.

Muniswamy Naidu belonged to a respectable Kamma family of Tiruttani taluk. He had his legal education in Madras, and distinguished himself as a civil lawyer as well as a public figure in the Chittoor district. Since 1920, he had been an elected member of the Justice Party in the Madras Legislative Council where he won recognition by his debating skill. In the Party he played the role of a peace-maker, reconciling the differences of the Tamilian and the Andhra wings.[1] These qualities were recognized by some in the party circles, but many viewed with suspicion his independent political outlook, his sympathy for the constructive programmes of the Congress and his active support for the *khaddar* movement. Nevertheless in the absence of a more acceptable candidate the mantle of leadership, which he 'never sought or solicited' fell on him.[2]

Soon after becoming the leader of the Justicites Naidu attempted to change the sectarian character of the Justice Party by discarding its ban on the admission of Brahmans.[3] Efforts were also made to reorganize the adminstrative and organizational aspects of the English newspaper, the *Justice* by placing it under the control of a committee and not solely in the hands of individual honorary editors, for this provided them the opportunity to indulge in factional controversies and foment discord in the party ranks.[4] As Naidu's effort had the support of a large section of the Justicites, the management of the *Justice* was entrusted to a special committee on 18 March 1932. On the political front Naidu's policies were progressive or at least showed a realistic approach to the then existing problems. As the Indian National Congress had been following a policy of civil disobedience, the British bureaucracy pursued a repressive policy to suppress its political activities. Naidu not only condemned the repressive measures of the government but also supported the Congress call for *purna swaraj* or complete political independence for the country. Addressing a public meeting in his constituency Naidu called on his constituents to work for *swarajya*, as opposed to the party's policy of working for Dominion status.[5] The party organ *Justice* subjected his

1 *Hindu*, 15 January 1930.

2 *Mail*, 12 March, 1930; *Hindu*, 15 January 1935.

3 *Mail*, 17 March 1930; *Dravidan* 15 and 16 March 1930.

4 *Mail*, 23 April 1930.

5 *Dravidan*, 28 February 1930.

statements to critical scrutiny and disowned them as not reflecting the party view.[1] Nevertheless, the moderates were willing to support him as far as amending the party constitution in order to admit Brahmans into the Justice Party.[2] However, they were not willing to support his call for *purna swaraj*. At the executive committee meeting held on 15 July 1930, Naidu succeeded in expunging all clauses restricting Brahman admission, from the party constitution.[3] Leading members of the Tamilnad Congress like Satyamurti and Srinivasa Iyengar welcomed the change in the Justice Party's constitution. Satyamurti urged that since the executive committee had resolved to change the party constitution, the Justicites should thereafter function as a true political party with a sound programme rather than exploit communal passions and prejudices to gain political ends. Srinivasa Iyengar urged the Brahmans, whose political creed was Dominion status for India, to join the Justice Party if it gave effect to the recommendation of its executive.[4]

The main opposition to the executive committee's decision came from the conservatives and junior members of the Tamil wing of the Justice Party. Most of them in this group were avowed disciples of Naicker. Rajan, a radical and an eloquent exponent of Naicker's social aims, led this group. Naturally the Self-Respecters were at the forefront in denouncing Naidu's efforts to admit Brahmans into the party. The *Dravidan* condemned Naidu's effort stating that it only betrayed his ignorance of party objectives. It stepped up a campaign against the executive committee decision and clamoured for the *status quo ante*. It also called for an immediate change in the party leadership.[5]

Naicker's opposition to Naidu manifested itself from the beginning of his election to the party leadership, for ideologically they were opposed to each other. Naidu's pro-Congress stance, his call for *purna swaraj* and his virulent attack on the Self-Respecter's atheistic propaganda further alienated him from Naicker and his followers. As a result, in the fourth Madras Legislative Council elections, Naicker supported the ministerialists instead of

1 *Mail*, 26 October 1930.

2 *Mail*, 17 March 1930; *Dravidan*, 16 March 1930.

3 *Mail*, 16 June 1930.

4 *Mail*, 17 June 1930.

5 *Dravidan*, 16 to 19 June and 4 to 6 July 1930.

the Justicites. The *Dravidan* as well as *Kudi Arasu* in a vituperative article criticised Naidu, accused the Justicites, especially Muthiah Chettiar and his community of purchasing votes and tempting indebted zamindars with loans of money at low rates of interest provided they cast their votes against Subbarayan, who contested from the South-Central Land-holders Constituency. Although Subbarayan won the election with a narrow majority from a compact constituency, his party was trounced at the elections.[1] Nevertheless Naicker was not disheartened, for he canvassed on behalf of Subbarayan among the elected council members including the Justicites so that he could form a new ministry.[2]

The *Dravidan* criticized the Justicites for carrying on a campaign of vilification against Subbarayan in several places in his landowners' constituency, despite the measures he had introduced during his term of office to safeguard the interests of non-Brahmans in various provincial services. It appealed to the Self-Respecters in the party to support Subbarayan's efforts to form a new ministry.[3] Naicker's efforts though unsuccessful indicate his antipathy towards Naidu and his leadership which at the time of the elections developed into an opposition to the Justice Party itself.

During this period Naicker was equally concerned with the political developments in the province. At this stage the Self-Respect movement had not made any substantial gains to be reckoned with as a force in provincial politics. Nevertheless Naicker's views and statements did influence at least a section of the politically awakened public in the Tamil districts and strengthened the hands of liberals, as well as the forces opposed to the Indian National Congress. The Congress had declared even before the appointment of the Simon Commission, complete political independence as its goal. Subsequently at the All-Parties Convention held in February 1928 and again in the annual session of the Indian National Congress at Calcutta in December 1928 the Congress

1 *Swadesamitran*, 16 September 1930; *Mail*, 10 September 1930. Out of the 98 elected members to the council only nine could be regarded as members clearly belonging to the Ministerialist group. Government of Madras, Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency for the year 1930-31 (Madras, 1932), pp. xvii-xviii.

2 *Dravidan*, 24 August 1930; *Kudi Arasu*, 31 August 1930.

3 *Dravidan*, 30 August 1930.

declared that it would accept Dominion status, provided it was granted by 31 December 1929, otherwise it would organize a campaign of non-violent non-cooperation including non-payment of taxes.[1] In February 1928, the Congress had boycotted the Simon Commission on the score that it was constituted without Indians by an outside authority to recommend constitutional changes. Nevertheless in October 1929 the Viceroy declared that as the eventual goal of India's constitutional progress was the 'attainment of Dominion status', a Round Table Conference (RTC) of all parties would be convened in London to discuss the recommendations of the Statutory Commission.[2] As the Viceroy's statement fell short of its demands, the Congress at its Lahore session in December 1929 declared complete independence as its goal, resolved to boycott the central and provincial legislatures, future elections as well as RTC and took steps to launch Civil disobedience campaign including non-payment of taxes.[3] Till February 1930 there was a lull in Congress activities.

On 12 March 1930 Gandhi launched the Satyagraha campaign by leading a band of followers on foot from his Sabarmati ashrama to Dandi in order to break the provisions of the Salt Act. They reached Dandi on the 4th. On the following day Gandhi violated the Salt Act and this was a signal for Congressmen in other provinces to start similar satyagrahas. But in Madras Presidency the press in general was too cautious of Gandhi's civil disobedience activities. The *Hindu* wrote guardedly about Gandhi's satyagraha campaign and urged the government to arrive at a compromise 'to save the situation fraught with dangerous possibilities.'[4] The Justice considered that the RTC was the key to resolve the political stalemate and urged the government to convene the conference at the earliest possible date.[5] Newspapers opposed to Civil disobedience campaign suggested that as Gandhi's campaign was confined only to Gujarat, the government should take no hasty steps to arrest

1 B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress, Vol. I* (1885-1935), p. 329.

2 Ibid., p. 350.

3 Ibid., p. 357.

4 NAI., *Home Department, Political, File No.* 18/4/1930, 1930, p. 4-6, *Public* p. 1.

5 Ibid., p. 1.

him and aggravate the situation. The *Dravidan* contended that if the government ignored Gandhi's campaign, it would lose its momentum and die a natural death.[1] On the other hand the nationalist vernacular press, though it anticipated miracles to happen from Gandhi's campaign, was silent regarding the prospective campaign of civil disobedience planned for the presidency.[2]

The Tamilnad Congress was divided whether or not to launch a civil disobedience campaign in the presidency. Srinivasa Iyengar, Satyamurti and Muthuranga Mudaliar abstained from activities connected with the campaign.[3] Rajaji and his followers planned to stage a march like that of Gandhi in Tamilnad. Under Rajaji's leadership 99 satyagrahis began their march on foot from Trichinopoly on 13 April and reached Vedaranyam near Cape Calimere on the 30th in order to collect illegally salt from the swamps. The following day the satyagrahis violated the Salt Act and were imprisoned.[4] In Madras the Andhra leaders like Prakasam and Nageswara Rao made salt from boiling seawater and courted imprisonment. They were however released the same day. For a further breach of Salt Act both of them were convicted on the 15th under section 143 Indian Penal Code and clapped into prison. With them the campaign lost its vigour in Madras City.[5] By 27 April the campaign was abandoned because of a violent clash between the police and a riotous mob resulting in firing and consequent loss of life. In Vedaranyam too, Satyagraha was discontinued after the arrest of the Satyagrahis by the end of May.[6] But for all that the Civil disobedience campaign entered a different phase: the picketing of liquor and foreign cloth shops was started. This time the government cracked down on Congress organizations, declaring

---

1 *Dravidan*, 31 March 1930; *Ms. NNR.*, 1930, p. 542.

2 NAI., *Home Department*, *Political*, *File No.* 18/5/1930, 1930, *No.* p. 4-7 *Public*, p. 2.

3 Ibid., p. 2.

4 NAI., *Home Department*, *File No.* 18/5/1930, 1930, *No.* p. 4-7, *Public*, p. 1.

5 Ibid., p. 1.; B. S. Baliga, *Tanjore District Handbook* (Madras, 1957), pp. 106-107, Government of Madeas, *Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency for the year* 1930-31 (Madeas, 1932), pp. xiii-xiv.

6 For a detailed report about the Vedaranyam salt satyagraha see the daily bulletins issued by G. Ramachandran, camp leader, Vedaeanyam satyagraha camp. NMML., *Tamilnad Satyagraha*, 1930, *File No.* G-116, pp. 7-35 and 73-135.

them unlawful under the Criminal Law Amendment Act and stifled their propaganda against the government by a series of orders under section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code. The Press Ordinance and the Unauthorized News-Sheets Ordinance put an end to the anti-government propaganda in the news media.[1] Thus the campaign in Madras was successfully suppressed.[2] Even otherwise the campaign evoked very little enthusiasm among the people, except for the march to Vedaranyam, as a result of the abstention of Srinivasa Iyengar and others from the campaign and want of proper leadership to continue it once the leader were arrested'.[3] Another important reason was the guarded tone of neutral papers and their lack of enthusiasm for the campaign.

Although the civil disobedience movement in general and the Salt Satyagraha and the picketing of liquor and foreign cloth shops in particular were intended to be non-violent, the police firings in Tindivanam, Arcot, Gudiyattam, Ellore and Sholingar indicated that mass law breaking could not be resorted to without provoking violence.[4] Both the government measures and the appeal of moderates among Congressmen brought the situation under control. Although non-Congress leaders unanimously denounced the government's repressive measures, they were equally critical of the acts of violence perpetrated, and warned the Congress leaders that the inculcation of disrespect for law would adversely affect future Congress governments too.[5]

Naicker viewed the civil disobedience movement and the salt satyagraha with disfavour like other constitutionalists and liberals in the country. Like them he expressed disapproval of the programme which the AICC had chosen to pursue. Furthermore he questioned the economic viability of the salt-making campaign and denounced it as the Congress Party's 'grand political stunt' meant to encourage people to subvert law and order in the country.[6]

---

1 Government of Madras, *Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency for the year* 1930-31, pp. xiv-xv.

2 *NMML., Tamilnad Satyagraha*, 1930, *File No.* G-116, pp. 39-41.

3 NAI., *Home Department, Political, File No.* 18/6/1930, 1930, *No.* p. 4-9 *Public*, p. 1.

4 Government of Madras, *Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency for the year* 1930-31, pp. xiv-xv.

5 Ibid., pp. xv-xvi.

6 *Kudi Arasu*, 13, 20, 27 April 1930.

However, Naicker's main target of attack was Gandhi and his political philosophy, as can be seen from the following passage in *Kudi Arasu*.

> We do not have any faith in Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha. We neither share his political programme nor the method of realizing it .... Even if the Salt Satyagraha is successful and salt is heaped in mountains on waysides, even if the British rule comes to an abrupt end and India attains *purna swaraj* we will not support the Salt Satyagraha or agree to the propriety of the Civil Disobedience Movement. We will say without fear from the top of the mountain that India will not be benefited in the slightest by this Satyagraha or by Gandhi's style of politics.*[1]

Such statements against Gandhi continued to appear in the paper and provoked the wrath of some national minded young men in the party. They considered that Naicker's speeches were not merely anti-national in character but 'brazen support' for the repressive measures of the bureaucracy. They argued that, as the declared policy of the movement was non-political, the leader should also stick to this policy and refrain from making controversial statement against Congress agitations. But Naicker turned a deaf ear to these arguments. Therefore, the youths belonging to the Nadar and the Muslim communities left the movement, disowning his views. This splinter group formed the National Self-Respect Party which did not live long after its formal inauguration.[2] Despite this Naicker was nonchalant and continued to pursue an anti-Congress policy opposing anything that Congress started without considering the merit of the issues involved. This attitude becomes explicit as the political attitude of the people veered round to the Indian National Congress in the province.

IV

From December 1931 to November 1932 Ramasami Naicker and Ramanathan toured the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, Greece, Turkey and other countries in the European continent. Although the trip was not made with any specific purpose they made the best use of it by acquainting themselves with different

1 *Ibid., 13 April 1930.

2 Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, p. 136.

socio-political conditions prevailing in those countries and by establishing useful contacts with like-minded organizations. In Berlin, contacts were made with Socialist and Communist organizations and in London they became members of the Rationalist Press Association and made arrangements with its authorities to send their publications periodically to Madras to supplement their atheistic propaganda.[1] They toured the Soviet Union for three months as the leaders of the Rationalist Association of South India—a new term given to the Self-Respect movement by Ramasami Naicker and Ramanathan while they were in Russia—visiting important places of cultural and historical interest. While in Moscow they registered themselves as members of the Anti-Religious Propaganda Association and specifically acquainted themselves with 'how exactly religion was dealt with by Russian atheists.'[2]

The visit to the Soviet Union had a deeper impact on Ramasami Naicker than on Ramanathan. Naicker was impressed by the 'phenomenal progress' the Russians had made in agriculture and industry and attributed this to Russian leaders' ability to modernize their social and political systems. He maintained that unless India made radical changes on the lines of the Soviet systems, there would not be any meaningful progress in the country. Even while on tour he discussed with Ramanathan the possibility of adopting a new programme for the movement in the light of the experience they had gained in the Soviet Union. Naicker's contemplated programme was heavily larded with Soviet Communism, but Ramanathan rejected the idea of change, and held that political Communism as developed in the Soviet Union was unsuitable for the Indian social system.[3]

Ramasami Naicker, however, on his return to Madras on 11 November 1932, decided to change the character of the Self-Respect movement, as otherwise non-Brahmans' political influence in the provincial politics would wane. The split within the Justicite ranks at the Tanjore conference also strengthened this view. Although party unity had been severely put to test on many occasions since Naidu's election to the Justice Party leadership, disunity crystallized

---

1 *Periyar's 85th Birthday Cnmmemoration Souvenir*, pp. 139-40.

2 S. Ramanathan, 'Self-Respect Movement' in *Kuttuci Kurucami Ninaivu Malar*, p. 40; *Periyar's 85th Birthday Commemoration Souvenir*, pp. 139-40.

3 Ibid., pp. 40-41.

once he became the chief minister. The opposition to his leadership came from the zamindars. They denounced Naidu's sympathy for the national movement and his open appreciation of its constructive programmes, although under dyarchy he had neither the opportunity northe requisite powers to implement them. However the immediate cause for the split between Naidu and the zamindars was the steps he had taken to ameliorate the plight of zamin ryots in the province. To improve their social and economic position the government had amended the Estates Land Act I of 1908. This Act conferred occupancy rights on zamin ryots and protected them against eviction. But due to the abject ignorance of ryots regarding the benefits conferred by the Act, the occupancy rights had been passing into the hands of a new class of tenants who did not cultivate, and whose only interest was in rack-renting the land. The original cultivators therefore were reduced to the position of sub-tenants and serfs. To rectify these defects and to confer occupancy rights on the *inamdari* ryots an amending bill was proposed to the Act of 1908 during Naidu's term of office. When the amending bill came up for discussion in the legislature many zamindars suspected that Naidu aimed not at improving the conditions of the ryots but at weakening their economic and political role in the community by indirectly instigating the ryots to rise against them.[1] When the legislature referred the bill to a select committee dominated by zamindars,[2] Naidu as an expert in agrarian problems, was appointed as a member to represent the ryots. Naidu's proposals to redress the ryots' grievances were regarded by the zamindars as detrimental to their own interests.[3] Further his unrelenting attitude at committee meetings confirmed their earlier suspicion, and they on their part decided to take necessary action to oust Naidu from power.[4]

---

[1] *Mail*, 4 and 16 August 1932.

[2] *Zamindari Ryot*, 13 February 1932, *Ms. NNR.*, 1932, p. 269, *Mail* 15 October 1932.

[3] The Estates Land Amending Act XVIII of 1936 was passed on 28 August 1936 to amend some of the provisions in the original Act I of 1908. According to this amendment occupancy rights were conferred on the inamdari ryots also.

[4] *Mail*, 4 August 1932; PMLC, Vol. LXIII (Madras, 1932), p. 546.

What originated as an ideological conflict and as a difference in approach to a specific problem later developed into a power struggle between Naidu and the zamindari group led by the Raja of Bobbili. And this came to a head at the Tanjore conference held in October 1932. The Self-Respecters played a dominant role, for the venue of the conference was a stronghold of the Self Respecters. Moreover, the regional committee was itself dominated by them. The chairman of the reception committee N. R. Samiappa Mudaliar was a staunch supporter of Naicker. Despite the fact that Naicker and Ramanathan were away in Europe, the local Self-Respecters on their own decision first supported Rajan and then the Raja of Bobbili rather than Naidu purely on ideological grounds.[1] The ultimate result of the power struggle at the Tanjore conference was that Naidu forfeited the party leadership. He subsequently lost the council leadership also in November 1932. This led to the formation of a new Justice ministry under the Raja of Bobbili on 5 November 1932.[2] Thereafter the Self-Respecters became the trusted supporters of Bobbili's ministry.

Between 1930 and 1932 political parties in the province were pre-occupied with constitutional changes that could be expected from the *Raj*. The Simon Commission Report published in June 1930 caused considerable disappointment in political circles. Its recommendation for full autonomy in the provinces was welcomed by responsive politicians, but even they were unable to support the over-riding powers vested in the governors of provinces and the complete authority and control exercized by the British at the Centre. The leaders of the Indian National Congress unanimously rejected the main recommendations and decided to boycott the RTC, unless India was given the right to secede from the British Empire and to form a national government responsible to the people.[3] Although the Justicites expressed their disappointment

---

1 Interiview with Naicker on 1 June 1969.

2 For details see (i) the statement by Diwan Bhadur B. Muniswamy Naidu regarding his resignation from the office of the Chief Minister. *PMLC*, Vol. LXIII, 1932, pp. 545-47. See also the statement by the Hon. the Raja of Bobbili regarding the circumstances which led to the resignation of Diwan Bahadur B. Muniswamy Naidu as chief minister. *PMLC*, Vol. LXIII, 1932, pp. 604-8.

3 R. C. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, pp. 367-68; *Hindu*, 24 June 1930.

with the Report, they reasoned that participation in the RTC would enable them to table alternative proposals in order to further constitutional advancement towards self-rule.[1] But Naidu's group opposed this decision. They advocated the boycott of the Round Table Conference, if assurances were not forthcoming from the authorities. They also contended that the aim of the conference should be to discuss and to settle the basis of complete Dominion status for India in collaboration with Gandhi.[2] The nationalist press called upon the government to reject the recommendations of the Simon Commission and convene a RTC on their own in order to frame a constitution on the basis of Dominion status.[3] It was further urged that the government should withdraw its repressive policies in order to induce the Congress leaders to attend such a conference.

Naicker and his followers took a realistic view of the recommendations of the Statutory Commission and the Congress stand on them. He commended the Commission's report 'as a right step' towards furthering constitutional progress in the country and listed the benefits derived by the minorities such as the Muslims and the scheduled castes.[4] He criticized the Congress stand as being in keeping with their tradition of non-co-operation. At the same time he made a rational evaluation of the political situation in the province and urged the government to abandon its repressive measures against Congress satyagrahis and made a pointed reference to the futility of convening the RTC without Congress participation.[5] About four months later Naicker once again said that the successful conclusion of the RTC could be achieved only by Gandhi's participation and that the government should come to terms with him. As a prerequisite, it should release all political prisoners including Gandhi and the government should state categorically that the object of the conference was to frame a scheme of responsible government on the basis of Dominion status.[6]

---

1 *Justice*, 24 June 1930, *Ms. NNR.*, 1930, pp. 950-51; *Justice* 3 July 1930.

2 *Mail*, 10 July 1930.

3 *Swadesamitran*, 9 June 1930.

4 *Kudi Arasu*, 29 June 1930.

5 *Kudi Arasu*, 14 September 1930.

6 *Kudi Arasu*, 2 November 1930.

The British Government paid no heed to the friendly advice given by responsive politicians like Naicker. As scheduled the first RTC commenced its session on 12 November 1930 and after a prolonged discussion, agreed on Dominion status and an all-India Federation, but failed to solve the question of minorities. On 19 January 1931 the British Prime Minister outlined the British policy on India. The new policy envisaged that responsibility for the Government of India be placed on legislatures; that the central government be an all-India Federation, embracing both the Indian States and British India in a bi-cameral legislature; that the British government recognize the principle of responsibility of the Executive to the legislature; that the subjects of Defence and External affairs be reserved to the governor-general with powers to administer them and that the governors' provinces be constituted on a basis of full responsibility.[1] Two days after the Prime Minister's announcement the Congress Working Committee met at Allahabad to consider the British Government's policy statement. As most of the All-India Congress Committee members were in jail the Working Committee was unable to take any firm decision. It only expressed its opinion that the terms set out in the policy statement were 'too vague and general to justify any change in the policy of the Congress'. It also implicitly expressed that in the absence of its senior members no new policy could be enunciated except to continue with the civil disobedience campaign.[2] The recommendations embodied in the Prime Minister's policy statement were thoroughly analyzed by the nationalist newspapers and their views ranged from one of support to one of outright rejection.[3] The constitutionalists, and the moderates viewed the policy outlined by the Prime Minister as one which marked a considerable advance in the recommendations of the Statutory Commission. Furthermore, they requested the release of Congress leaders from prisons immediately so as to enable discussion of the British Government's constitutional proposals.[4]

---

1 R. C. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, pp. 371-72.

2 B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I pp. 424-25.

3 *Hindu*, 23 and 24 January 1931; *Swadesamitran* 23 January 1931.

4 *Mail*, 23 January 1931; *Hindu*, 24 January, 1931 and *Swadesamitran*, 24 January 1931.

Naicker and his followers failed to subject the new constitutional proposals to a critical analysis and to ofler their views. None of their papers devoted its columns to a thorough discussion of these important proposals. Neither was there any elaborate discussion in any of their party conferences. Instead, they merely welcomed and supported the recommendations as being in keeping with their pro-British attitude.[1] Likewise, the Gandhi-Irwin agreement was welcomed without adequate analysis or discussion. The resolutions passed at the Self-Respecters' conference in March 1931 indicate their general apathy towards the impending constitutional changes.

Since the launching of the civil disobedience campaign the political situation was perceptibly changing in favour of the Indian National Congress. Public sympathy was also in their favour. Although Naicker issued periodical statements criticizing the civil disobedience campaign, he acknowledged the fact that it awakened the political consciousness of the masses. The Gandhi-Irwin pact, though a defeat to the much publicized Congress stand, was viewed by Naicker as a moral victory for the Congress because the British Government had indirectly conceded the Congress claim that it alone had the mandate to speak on behalf of a politically insurgent India and that its views should be heard at all future conferences. He attributed this success to the government policy of repression mounted against Congress satyagrahis.[2]

When Naicker and Ramanathan were away in Europe between November 1931 and December 1932 there was no visible change in the Self-Respect movement policy either towards the government or the Congress. They welcomed Gandhi's participation in the Second RTC.[3] At the same time they criticized the government for ignoring the condition of the Gandhi-Irwin agreement and the continuing policy of suppression.[4] In the face of government coercion when Congress revoked the Gandhi-Irwin agreement, the Self-Respecters urged the government to take steps to check police excesses, if not totally abandon its repressive policies. Unless the

1 *Kudi Arasu*, 25 January and 1 February 1931.

2 *Kudi Arasu*, 15 Marxh 1931.

3 *Kudi Arasu*, 23 August 1931.

4 *Kudi Arasu*, 30 August 1931.

Raj abandoned its policy of coercion, they said that the Congress leaders could not be brought to the conference table. In addition to these, appeals were made to the moderates to bring about a compromise between government and Congress leaders, otherwise the Self-Respecters feared that Gandhi's boycott would result in the abandonment of the third RTC.[1] But at the same time they roundly blamed the Congress leaders for their failure to respond to the government's invitation to participate in the third RTC.[2]

Soon after his return from the foreign tour, Naicker showed very little interest either in the proceedings of the third RTC or its outcome, as he was concerned with the reorganization of his party for a 'dynamic new programme of work.'[3] His arguments in favour of reconstituting the movement into a political organization based on socialistic principles were welcomed by a large section of members who had already been exposed to the Communist ideology through the trade unions. Trade unionism gained in importance with the growth of industries in the presidency. Factories increased three-fold from 511 in 1920 to 1661 in 1930. Likewise the average number of operatives employed daily increased correspondingly from 101, 655 in 1920 to 142,000 in 1920. The following table gives the comparative figures for 1920 and 1930.

1 *Kudi Arasu*, 31 July 1932; *Dravidan*, 2 March 1932.

2 *Kudi Arasu*, 23 October 1932; *Dravidan*, 25 October 1932.

3 *Kudi Arasu*, 20 Novmber 1932.

TABLE VI

Comparative statement showing the increase in the number of factories in the Madras Presidency during the years 1920-30

	Factories	*In* 1920	*In* 1930
1.	Government and Local fund Factories	17	30
2.	Textiles	23	45
3.	Minerals and Metals	7	21
4.	Food, drink and tobacco	178	769
	(a) Rice-mills	149	463
	(b) Ground-nut factories	2	194
	(c) Tea factories	nil	74
5.	Chemical and dyes	8	37
6.	Paper and printing	29	59
7.	Tile factories	37	57
8.	Processes relating to wood, stone, glass etc.	42	72
9.	Processes connected with hides and skins	3	11
10.	Jute, cotton, gunning and baling presses	139	395
11.	Engineering workshops of various kinds	35	67

Source: *Census of India*, 1931: *Madras*, Vol. XIV, pt. 1 (Madras, 1932), p. 221.

Workers employed in these factories organized themselves into trade unions and were initially led by nationalist politicians and later by communist leaders.[1] Such leaders in the Tamil districts joined the Self-Respect movement in large numbers, although their exact number cannot be given in the absence of official records. This communist group within the movement was led by M. Singaravelu, a labour leader of considerable eminence and an able exponent of

[1] Communists infiltrated into trade unions only after the visit of S. Saklatwala, a prominent communist leader and a member of the British Parliament, to Madras in 1927. B. S. Baliga, *Madras District Gazetteers*: *Coimbatore*, p. 125.

theoretical communism in Tamilnad. In him Naicker found a competent person to draw up a new programme for the party. especially in view of his ideological differences with Ramanathan. In collaboration with Singaravelu, Naicker chalked out a new programme and to discuss this he convened a meeting of the general body at Erode on 29 December 1932.[1]

The new programme envisaged the formation of two wings within the body of Self-Respecters: the Self-Respect Party and the Self-Respect League Samadharma (Communist) Party of South India. It was clear from the programme that while the latter would put up candidates for the elections of the Provincial Council and other local bodies, the former would confine its activities solely to social reform. Apart from this, there was very little difference in their objectives. Both aimed at achieving political independence for the country through constitutional methods. (They advocated nationalization of all means of production, distribution and public transport, *amelioration* of the conditions of the industrial and the agricultural labourers and propagation of the original aims of the Self-Respect movement with redoubled vigour.[2] The aims of the two wings of the movement were comprehensively termed the Erode Programme.[3]

When the Erode Programme was taken up for discussion at the general body meeting the important issue was whether or not to accord a mandate to the members to contest the elections on behalf of the political wing of the movement. A large body of members favoured direct participation in the elections instead of supporting other political parties, which they had been doing previously. They said that in the face of increasing popularity of the Congress among the masses, especially after the non-co-operation campaign and the salt satyagraha, the situation warranted such a decision. They pointed out that although the Justice Party had been looking after the political interests of non-Brahmans, its hold on them had been loosening in recent years largely for want of contact with the masses and because of its own internal dissensions. So they argued that unless the Justice Party made some radical changes in its programme

---

1 Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, p. 140.

2 *Kudi Arasu*, 1 January 1933.

3 See appendix 4 for the Erode Programme.

in view of the upsurge of nationalism, and strengthened its ranks, it would not be able to challenge the Congress supremacy in the province. As this could not be expected at this stage, the advocates of the new programme suggested that the political wing of the movement should be strengthened. Only a mass organization with a radical programme like the Self-Respect movement could take up the challenge posed by the growing strength of the 'Brahman dominated' Tamilnad Congress.[1]

The main opposition to this line of argument came from Ramanathan and others who objected to direct involvement in politics because of the many compromises the movement would have to make in its radical ideology, to be acceptable to the electorates. They maintained that compromises and adjustments in the programme would result in abandonment of the entire social plank of the movement in favour of obtaining political power. To support their argument they cited the example of the Justice Party, which in their opinion must have had a definite programme to uplift non-Brahman masses but when once the Justicites accepted office under the dyarchic system of government and tasted power, they failed to implement those programmes from fear of political consequences. The Justice Party gave up the social reform programmes in favour of retaining political power. Therefore Ramanathan and others pleaded that the Self-Respecters should not dissipate their energies in politics but should conserve them and work for the social progress of non-Brahman masses.[2] They also mentioned that the modified programme was an imitation of Soviet Communism which, if adopted, would be impossible to implement in a society wedded to extreme forms of religious superstition and age old beliefs regarding property rights. Besides this, they also warned that political Communism, like priestly authority would not tolerate the spirit of individual enquiry and reasoning, and even if criticisms were allowed they could be only permitted to the extent of their conformity with the communist ideology. As such they warned that the movement should be careful in adopting a policy which would eventually pave the way for a totalitarian system.[3]

---

1 *Kudi Arasu*, 8 January 1933.

2 *Kudi Arasu*, 8 January 1933.

3 Ibid., 8 January 1933.

At this stage Ramasami Naicker joined the debate and said that the movement would remain essentially a social reform movement but a political wing would also be opened to help those who might be interested in contesting the elections on behalf of the movement. The political wing was conceived, Naicker said, after giving considerable thought to the prevailing political conditions in the country. He also reasoned that since the movement was a mass organization its programmes, whether social, political or economic, should be oriented towards the larger interests of the masses rather than to the privileged few in the community. Therefore he appealed to the members of the general-body to adopt the programme without more ado, in the interest of the country. After bitter opposition from Ramanathan, Sami Chidambaranar and others, it was adopted, giving birth to 'the Self-Respect League: Samadharma Party (Communist Party) of South India.'[1]

To confirm the decisions of the general-body meeting and to give a wider publicity to the new programme Ramasami Naicker convened the Self-Respect Conference at Tiruppur in Coimbatore district in April 1933. Naicker's speech at that Conference gives the impression that he again tried to convince Ramanathan and others of the importance of the new programme. He said that the movement had all along been indulging in mere rhetoric against popular Hinduism and the ruses of Brahmans without paying any attention to the economic and political interests of non-Brahman masses. They could improve their social status only by promoting their economic condition and not merely by rejecting Brahmans' ritual status. The economic interests of non-Brahmans could be improved not by the present democratic system of government dominated by capitalists, but by a socialist government formed by the workers themselves. To establish a proletarian government, Naicker said, the workers should rally round the Samadharma Party of South India and work out the Erode Programme.[2]

With the ending of the Tiruppur Conference, both wings of the Self-Respect movement became very active in spreading

---

1 Ibid., 1 January 1933.

2 *Kudi Arasu*, 30 April 1933.

atheism and Communism in the Tamil country. Ramanathan, as the leader of the social reform wing, revived his contacts with the atheistic organizations in the West, notably the Rationalist Press Association in London, the National Secular Council, the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism and the Free Thinkers Association in Europe and received from them pamphlets attacking institutional religion, the priestly class and idol worship. These were translated into Tamil and made available to the public at a nominal price.[1] Regular translations of the works of Robert Ingersoll, Charles Bradlaugh and Bertrand Russell appeared in *Kudi Arasu* in addition to the publication, in the words of the Mail, of 'such blasphemous books'[2] as the *Gods are the Toys of Men*, *Religion is the Bane of the World*, and *Why I am not a Christian*.[3] Besides these Singaravelu's vernacular articles expounding the theories relating to the origins of religions, and of the universe and on the many ignorant beliefs of common people also appeared in the *Kudi Arasu* which offered abundant material for atheistic propaganda.[4]

In 1933, unlike in the previous years, their attack on religion was not confined to the Hindu faith alone but included Christianity. In the First half of 1933, *Kudi Arasu* published articles ridiculing some of the teachings of Christ and questioning the morality of Catholic priests. *A dialogue between Paramasivam and Jesus Christ* and the *Self Respect Conference of the Gods*, to mention just two, were such articles in which Christ was 'grossly and vulgarly insulted' and his teachings were 'most offensively parodied.'[5] In addition to such writings the Self-Respecters directed their propaganda at the scheduled castes who were converted to Christianity in Tanjore and Trichinopoly districts in large numbers. Between March and April 1933 they addressed over 120 public meetings in these districts, in which they impressed

1 *Mail*, 24 April 1933.

2 *Mail*, 24 April 1933.

3 Authorship is not known for the *Gods are the Toys of Men* and *Religion is the Bane of the World*. S. Gurusami translated Jean Meslier's *Rationalism* and Bertrand Russell's *Why I am not a Christian* into Tamil and these were published in book form in 1935 and 1934 respectively.

4 M. Singaravelu, *Vinnana Muraiyum Mutanampikkaiyum* (Scientific Method and Superstitious Beliefs), (Erode, 1934).

5 *Mail*, 24 April 1933.

on the members of the scheduled castes that their social status, in spite of conversion, was not a whit better than that of their Hindu brethren and that they were exploited by the Catholic clergy instead of the Brahman priests. The effect of such propaganda stunned the local Catholic diocese, because an estimated number of 10,000 to 12,000 scheduled caste members kept away from the church from these districts alone.[1]

The attack on Christianity was a new phase in the anti-religious campaign of the Self-Respect movement. Three reasons could be ascribed to this departure, in denouncing religions other than Hinduism. Firstly, there was an opinion prevalent among the orthodox Hindus that the movement would not challenge organized religions like Christianity because it had to face an onslaught from the churches of various denomination. In the absence of such organized institutions to defend the theology and practice of Hinduism, the men behind the movement were emboldened to condemn Hindu ritual practices in hyperbolic and intemperate language. The Hindu leaders further contended that nothing significant would be achieved by the movement with its anti-Hindu religious activities other than indirectly aiding the Christian missionaries to proselytize more Hindus.[2] In the absence of data these views cannot be proved as one of the reasons for mounting an attack on Christianity, particularly on the Catholics. Secondly, the Self-Respecters themselves realized that their message had not reached a large segment of the scheduled castes who had embraced Christianity,[3] and therefore they directed their appeal to the converted Christians. This may have some validity because of the opinions expressed on these lines in the Self-Respect press. The *Puratchi*, for example, called on the Self-Respecters to extend their sphere of activity to include other religions as well, because a segment of the Tamil community had been under the yoke of a different kind of priestly class whose aims were similar to those of the Brahman priests.[4] The third reason was that since the leaders of the movement had learnt the technique of engendering class struggles as a result of their

---

1 *Mail*, 22 April 1933.

2 *Swadesamitran*, 3 March 1933.

3 *Kudi Arasu*, 23 April 1933.

4 *Puratchi*, 3 December 1933.

acquaintance with Communist organizations outside the country, they started exploiting the social disabilities and the economic distress of all the untouchables, irrespective of their religions, to foment class trouble. This view seems to be more appropriate if one glances through the numerous speeches made by the Self-Respecters during 1933. On 21 April 1933 Ramanathan at a largely attended meeting on the Marina beach in Madras said that mass liberation was impracticable unless people were saved from the quagmire of religion.[1] The *Kudi Arasu* in its editorial on 1 January 1933, said that the beginning of the proletarian revolution was directly connected with the liberation of the working people from the authority of the churches. Another paper, *Puratchi*, on 3 December 1933, came out more openly than before and said that, as the emergence of 'present day Capitalism' was unmistakably connected with the rise of the missionary class, the aim of the movement should be to liberate the common man from the hold of the Christian Church.[2]

The view that the movement was interested in engendering and fostering class struggle among the under privileged sections of the community to raise the standard of revolt against constituted authorities was supported by the activities of the political

---

1 *Mail*, 22 April 1933.

2 Their condemnation of Christianity in general and of the Catholic Church in particular, however, did not go unchallenged. One Catholic priest, Father Thomas, contended that the object of the movement was not 'so much the elevation of the lowly and the humble to a position of equality with their more fortunate brethren, nor the discovery of the fundamental equality of all men, but the extirpation of all ideals of God from the hearts of the people'. Commenting on the charge that the Catholic Church had not done anything to improve the social status of the untouchables, he said that untouchability was a mere survival of Hinduism and what the Church attempted was 'to mitigate its rigours and to emphasize the principle of Christian equality in moral dignity and the value of all men without distinction'. Then he listed the number of ameliorative measures undertaken by the Church to uplift the social and economic status of the scheduled castes and posed a question to the Self-Respect movement whether it could show any record of such work for their benefit. *Mail*, 22 April 1933. Letters on these lines written by Catholics were published in the *Mail* on 24 April and 10 May 1933. Notwithstanding such protests from the Church leaders, the Self-Respecters continued their propaganda against the Church and Christianity.

wing; the Samadharma Party of South India. Firstly, it increased the literature on Communism by publishing low-priced books and pamphlets. The First Five-Year Plan of the Soviet Union was published in Tamil not only to project the image of Russia but to show the benefits of establishing a proletarian government.[1] Translations of the biographies of Lenin and Karl Marx were made popular among the Tamils.[2] Secondly, the Tamil weeklies like *Puratchi*, *Pakuttarivu*, *Samadharmam* and *Vedigundu* published articles showing the similarity in ideology between the Self-Respect movement and Communism. One writer in the *Vedigundu* claimed that there existed practically no difference between the ideology of the Self-Respect movement and the creed of Communism except only in details and in the method of working them out.[3] Another wrote in the same paper that the Self-Respect movement had now come to stay as a Communist movement, and that the day was not far off when a Communist form of government would be established.[4] The official organ *Kudi Arasu* also published articles expounding Lenin's theory of class warfare and the methods of establishing a proletarian government in the country. Singaravelu's article entitled 'Capitalism and Communism', which appeared in *Kudi Arasu* on 12 November 1933, defined Communism as 'communal proprietorship, distribution of the fruits of labour and profits among all people, the predominance of the popular voice and a labourite rule', and appealed 'to the workers to strive hard to establish a Communist rule in the country. Thirdly, they popularized the celebration of May Day by organizing rallies and convening public meetings. Self-Respect Youth Leagues celebrated it as a festive day, taking a pledge to unite the labourers and the depressed classes and lead them to socialism by rousing their spirit.'[5] Ramasami Naicker himself addressed over 50 meetings to celebrate May Day in 1933.[6] In

1 *Periyar's 89th Birth day Commemoration Souvenir*, p. 76.

2 Raymond Postgate's *Karl Marx* was translated into Tamil. S. Ramanathan translated a biography of Lenin into Tamil and this was serialized in Samadharmam from November 1934 onwards.

3 *Vedigundu*, 5 October 1933; *Ms. NNR.*, 1933, p. 568.

4 *Vedigundu*, 27 October 1933; *Ms. NNR.*, 1933, p. 622.

5 *Pahuttarivu*, 1 May 1933.

6 Ibid., 1, 7, 14, 21, 28 May 1933.

the same year, on 14 May, Naicker in his appeal calling on Self-Respect and socialist associations to celebrate the May Day said:

> As imperialism and capitalism reign supreme everywhere, all the legitimate rights of the labourers have been ignored and this evil has specially become rooted in India, which has been rotting in slavery for many years. The capitalists have ventured to famish labourers in the name of retrenchment, reduction of operatives and more hours of work. O labourers! All of you should join together on May Day to demonstrate the strength of your unity for the purpose of securing the right of living for the working classes. Strive on this day to acquire the necessary courage, strength and unity for bringing down the mighty capitalist group and imperialism and establishing a labour government on a socialistic basis.[1]

Fourthly, Naicker toured the Tamil districts denouncing all forms of private property and advocating the establishment of 'the Russian form of Government', as the one best suited to the country.[2] During the course of his tour, besides forming a number of branches for the Samadharma Party, he propagated Communist ideology and sowed the seeds of class and caste hatred.

The government viewed Naicker's propaganda with concern as it aided the spread of Communism in the province. Its anxiety was further increased when it saw popular labour leaders like Singaravelu and P. Jivanandam taking prominent roles in the political wing of the movement. As labour trouble was on the increase in the country as a whole, the government resolved to stem the activities of both the wings of the movement. The opportunity to take stern action came sooner than expected, when Naicker wrote an editorial in the *Kudi Arasu* on 1 November 1933 detailing the reasons 'why today's Government should be overthrown'. This triggered off a chain of reactions from the government. A security of 1000 rupees each from the printer and the publisher of the paper was demanded and the paper itself soon ceased to exist. Subsequently, on 30 December 1933,

1 Ibid., 14 May 1933; *Ms. NNR.*, 1933, p. 278.

2 B. S. Baliga, *Madras District Gazetteers*; *Coimbatore*, p. 124.

Naicker himself was clapped into prison for writing that editorial, and was charged with inciting the people to overthrow the constituted authority by force. Naicker did not challenge this charge; instead he preferred to send a written statement to the Court to this effect:

> For the last 7 or 8 years I have been propagating the principles of socialism in a democratic way with the aim of bringing about social and economic equality among the people. This is in no way an offence. Whether the government takes any proceedings against me or not this has given me an opportunity to show to my followers that they should also be prepared to face such repressive measures that might be let loose by the government.*[1]

Naicker was found guilty of sedition and on 30 December 1933, he was sentenced to nine months imprisonment in addition to a fine of 300 rupees or an additional period of one month in jail.[2]

Notwithstanding Naicker's incarceration, the movement carried on its propaganda in favour of Communism and atheism. In the place of *Kudi Arasu*, *Puratchi* which had been recently started, expressed its determination to work more vigorously than before for getting rid of all missionaries and for promoting the 'Self-Respect revolution' until complete victory was achieved. The object, it professed was not

> to get rid of white capitalists and the rule of the whites and replace them by black capitalists and the rule of the blacks, but to get rid of the capitalists as a class and all religions and to secure to all people equality in life irrespective of sex or status.[3]

In 1934 the government banned the Communist Party of India and the Young Workers League for their 'aim to overthrow the existing order of society'. Although the Self-Respect leaders condemned this action in bold terms, they took the precaution of declaring that the Samadharma Party was a non-Communist organization, 'that it was only a socialist party, that

---

1 **Periyar 's 89th Birthday Commemoration Souvenir*, p. 77.

2 Ibid.

3 *Puratchi*, 26 November 1933, *Ms. NNR.*, 1934, p. 677.

it worked always within the bounds of law, that violence had no place in it, and that its aim was the establishment of the British system of administration and failing that alone a communist system of administration.'[1] Ramanathan's statement further clarified the aims of the Self-Respect movement. The statement declared that the aim of the movement in the political sphere was to check the subversive activities of the Congress and for this purpose the movement not only followed constitutional methods but also whole heartedly co-operated with the government whenever it was necessary to do so. On the economic front the movement envisaged greater extension of the co-operative movement, labour legislation, national control of public utilities and relief of rural indebtedness, with the active-co-operation of the government. In the social sector, the movement, aimed at abolition of caste system and removal of disabilities based on birth. The statement concluded with the declaration that its programme had a greater chance of implementation under the guidance of the British Government than under the aegis of the Congress rule.[2]

In 1934 Naicker met Rajaji, who was then serving a term of imprisonment in Coimbatore jail for his role in the Salt Satyagraha. It was their first meeting after the Kāñchipuram conference. Rajaji invited Naicker to join the Congress once again. He accepted the suggestion, provided a common programme was agreed upon as a basis for supporting the Congress. Accordingly they jointly formulated a programme, which was sent to Gandhi for approval. Curiously enough the most important aspect of the programme was that the TNCC should agree to implement the principle of communal representation in all the representative bodies in the civil and in the liberal professions.[3] As this was totally unacceptable to Gandhi, Rajaji's efforts to bring Naicker back into the Congress fold failed.

After Naicker's release in August 1934. the TNCC renewed its efforts to get him back into the organization. Likewise the Justice Party also put out feelers to ascertain his intentions about his future work in the province. However, he himself was unable to

1 B. S. Baliga, *Madras District Gazetteers; Coimbatore*, p. 126.

2 M.R.C., *Public Department, General G.O. No.* 470, 22 March 1935.

3 Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, pp. 153-54.

take a decision on the future work of the Samadharma Party as the government was determined to ban any party with leftist leanings. In addition to this uncertainty, the Self-Respect movement itself was threatened with a possible ban, although it had unequivocally declared itself a non-Communist organization earlier that year. Tempered probably by imprisonment and by his own anxiety to avoid any further confrontation with the government, Naicker satisfied himself in lending support to any one of the major parties in the ensuing central assembly elections on a conditional basis. He drafted a ten point programme which was a modified version of the Erode Programme, and presented it to the Justice Party and the Indian National Congress.[1] The Congress had already rejected a similar programme earlier that year. But the leaders of the incumbent Justice Party accepted it hoping that an alliance with a mass organization like the Self-Respect movement would improve their chances in the forthcoming elections.

1 See Appendix 5 for Ramasami Naicker's Ten Point Programme.

CHAPTER—IV

NAICKER, THE JUSTICE PARTY AND THE ANTI-HINDI MOVEMENT (The First Phase), 1934 – 1938

I

Decline of the Justice Party

II

Anti-Hindi Movement : First Phase

III

Naicker's Emergence as the Leader of the Justice Party

NAICKER, THE JUSTICE PARTY AND THE MOVEMENT (The First Phase)

The primary concern of the leaders of the Justice Party in 1934 was to improve the public image of the party in order to contest legislative assembly elections to be held later that year. Although their image had been tarnished by internecine quarrels in 1934, the Raja of Bobbili, who succeeded Nayudu that year, tried to build up the party by dispelling the fears of regional groups, gaining the support of factional groups, offering position in the government and the representative bodies, and uniting the forces opposed to the Congress. However, the Raja's chances to arrest the decline of the party or to improve its prospects in the elections were remote because of the growing popularity of the Congress and the decision of the provincial Congress leaders to contest the forthcoming legislative assembly elections.

Success of a party in an election depends largely on the efficiency of the propaganda machinery and the enthusiasm of propagandists in disseminating its policies. In the case of the Justice Party, except for its government propaganda machinery, it had neither a well knit propaganda unit like the Congress nor a chain of vernacular newspapers in the districts to spread the Justice creed among the masses. The party's only newspaper, the *Justice*, went into liquidation soon after the Raja of Bobbili started the *New Times* in early 1933. Even this was not very popular among a section of the Justicites because it viewed it as the Raja's mouthpiece rather than the organ of the party.[1] The Congress had voluntary propagandists whereas the Justice Party had to depend on paid workers. While there were many vernacular newspapers which could spread the Congress creed the Justice Party had none.

Faced with these handicaps, the Raja had no choice but to seek an informal political alliance with the Self-Respect movement which, he thought, would provide the necessary propaganda weapon to fight the Congress. He was also aware of Naicker's influence on

1 *Mail*, 20 September 1933.

the Tamil wing of the Justice Party and the large number of Self-Respecters who had infiltrated into the party over the years. For these reasons the Erode Programme was accepted, over-riding the orthodox non-Brahman opposition to the atheistic propaganda carried on by the Self-Respecters and the small number of eligible voters in their ranks with the property qualifications attached to the franchise. Nevertheless the political understanding between the Self-Respecters and the members of the Justice Party, contrary to the expectations of the Raja, failed to strengthen the party or consolidate its position in subsequent elections. Instead, Naicker's entry into the Justice Party helped his emergence as a political force in the province, and this could be seen from the political events that followed from 1934 onwards.

I

The thirteenth annual conference of the Justice Party was convened in October 1934 to take decisions on two important questions which were likely to influence the outcome of the central legislative assembly elections. The first was the long standing issue of admitting Brahmans to the party, and the second was incorporating Naicker's Erode programme in the general programme of the party. On the first question opinion was divided. Patro, who moved a resolution which sought an amendment to the party constitution to remove the ban on Brahmans, said that, irrespective of whether Brahmans took advantage of it or not, the mere amending of the constitution would improve the image of the party, take the sting out of opposition criticisms as well as improve their chances in the forthcoming legislative assembly elections. Opposition to his resolution came from the Tamil wing dominated by the Self-Respecters. Ramanathan, Balasubramaniam and Alagiriswamy initially opposed the resolution, but later supported it as a measure of political expediency.[1] Ramasami Naicker who participated in this discussion agreed that though the time was not ripe for admitting Brahmans, he still advised his followers to give the amendment a trial on the eve of the elections. On account of Naicker's own moderation and his counsel, the Justice leaders were able to adopt the resolution without further postponement.[2]

1 *Hindu* and *Mail*, 1 October 1934.

2 *Hindu* and *Mail*, 1 October 1934.

The proceedings of the conference indicate that the Justice leaders showed little enthusiasm in accepting the Erode programme. Though the Raja of Bobbili favoured a decision at that conference, his senior colleagues advised him not to precipitate matters in the teeth of the orthodox members' opposition to the Self-Respecters. Aware of the prevailing mood, Naicker's followers urged that a decision be taken on the programme without delay so that the Justice Party could press into service the Self-Respecters' propaganda wing at the time of the elections. As opinion was sharply divided over this question, the Raja counselled postponement of a decision to a later date. Consequently, the proposal was shelved and a threatened split in the party averted.

To maintain party solidarity on the eve of the elections, the Raja was prepared to go to any length. Party principles were compromised and even party veterans were denied opportunities to contest prestigious positions. When the choice had to be made between Muthiah Chettiar and C. Natesa Mudaliar for the mayoralty of Madras City, the Raja preferred Chettiar, disregarding advice from his colleagues. The main reason for this decision was the electoral understanding reached between the Raja of Bobbili and Muthiah Chettiar over the commerce constituency. Shanmugam Chettiar was contesting the elections from this constituency as an independent candidate with the support of the Justice Party. As Muthiah Chettiar's own community members dominated the commerce constituency, he had promised to work for Shanmugam's success.[1]

The Raja of Bobbili's enthusiasm for contesting the legislative assembly elections was not shared by his colleagues. Very few were interested in it on account of the unwieldy size of the assembly constituencies, the effort and money needed and the impossibility of gaining either power or position at the national level. Even those like Shanmugam Chettiar who were interested, were reluctant to stand on the Justice ticket because of its predominantly provincial outlook and its limited political objectives. The growing popularity of the Congress was another factor which deterred politicians from seeking election on the Justice ticket.[2] So the Justice leaders

1 *Dhinamani*, 13 December 1934; *Ms. NNR.*, 1934, p. 34; *Mail*, 11 December 1934.

2 Interview with Balasubramaniam, 28 July 1969.

were able to field only three candidates for the eleven non-Muslim constituencies in the presidency and for the rest they contented themselves with lending their moral support to those who opposed Congress candidates.[1] The Indian National Congress however put forward candidates in all the eleven constituencies.[2]

The Indian National Congress, consistent with its political objectives, sought a mandate from the electors to work for the political independence of the country. Both its election manifesto and its campaigns reflected this objective. Satyamurti, the Congress candidate for the Madras city constituency, made his party's policy very clear in his campaign. He asked the people tersely whether they wanted 'slavery or freedom.'[3] The Congress candidates in general appealed to the electors of all communities to condemn the White Paper which embodied the proposals for the reform of the Indian Constitution, and the Report of the Joint Select Committee which approved the proposals of the White Paper with certain modifications, published in March 1933 and in October 1934, respectively.[4] In contrast to this, the Justice Party failed to issue a manifesto, although its leaders explained their future programme. Neither this verbal account of their programme nor the defence of their co-operation with the bureaucracy appealed to the electors, who had been fed on the romantic message of *purna swaraj* by the Congress. In the absence of a manifesto, the Justice propagandists were not consistent either in enumerating the achievements of their party or in explaining its future programme to the electors. Lack of organized and co-ordinated propaganda was also responsible for some of the Justice propagandists making a frontal attack on Brahmans, contrary to the pledges given by Justice leaders at the thirteenth confederation.[5]

Besides, Justice candidates did not place proper emphasis on their party's achievements over a decade in office. Instead they preferred to commend themselves to the electors on the strength of the record of their public work. Some candidates were even

1 *Mail*, 20 November 1934; *Hindu*, 12 November 1934.

2 *Mail*, 20 November 1934.

3 *Hindu*, 7 November 1934.

4 *Mail* and *Hindu*, 7, 8 and 9 November 1934.

5 *Mail*, 14 November 1934 and 5 January 1935.

anxious not to stress their political affiliations.[1] Ramaswami Mudaliar, the Justice candidate for the Madras city non-Muslim constituency, was a notable example. In his four-page appeal to the electors he narrated his personal achievements both in the legislative assembly and the committees on which he served rather than enumerate the party's achievements in working the dyarchic form of government.[2] Although Congress had opposed this dual form of government, the Justice Party worked it, and thereby laid a firm foundation for the operation of parliamentary democracy in the province, especially when constitutional breakdowns were common in all other provinces at that time.

The Justice candidates' want of conviction in their party policies and the Self-Respecters' support placed them at a disadvantage in the election. The line of the Self-Respecter's propaganda was to leave the programmes of the Justice Party unexplained and to show to the non-Brahman electors that the Tamilnad branch of the Indian National Congress was dominated and led by Brahmans. The Congress Parliamentary Board set up six Brahman and five non-Brahman candidates for the eleven non-Muslim constituencies.[3] In their searching analysis of Congress candidates, the Self-Respecters did not spare the sanatanists or the orthodox Brahmans for their opposition to the Sarda Act or the Temple-entry Bills; the former sought to prevent child marriages and the latter tried to lift the ban on Harijans' temple-entry. As they opposed these social Acts on the basis of the Hindu scriptures, the Self-Respecters despised both the scriptures and the Hindu religion for their sectarian bias.[4] Ignoring the main issue whether the electors should decide for or against the Justicites, the non-Brahman electors overwhelmingly responded to the call for *swaraj* by electing congress candidates.

The legislative assembly elections were a spectacular success for the Congress. All its 11 candidates were returned, decisively

1 *Hindu*, 12 November 1934.

2 A. Ramaswami Mudaliar, *An appeal to the voters of the Madras City* (Madras, 1934), pp. 1-3.

3 Interview with Balasubramaniam on 28 July 1969; *Mail* and *Hindu*, 20 November, 1934.

4 Interview with Balasubramaniam and T. P. Vedachalam, on 28 and 27 July 1969 respectively.

defeating some of the outstanding personalities in the Justice camp. Ramaswami Mudaliar lost to Satyamurti in a predominantly non-Brahman constituency. Satyamurti polled 8,758 votes and his opponent, 3,351.[1] In the Ganjam cum Vizagapatam non-Muslim constituency B. Sitarama Raju, a Justice and a sitting member of the legislative assembly was unseated by the Congress candidate V. V. Giri by a margin of over ten thousand votes.[2] The same story was repeated in the South Arcot cum Chingleput constituency. The biggest set-back for the Justicites was undoubtedly the defeat of Shanmugam Chettiar in a compact constituency by a narrow margin of 92 votes at the hands of the Congress candidate, Venkatachalam Chettiar.[3] With the defeat of Shanmugam Chettiar the Congress secured an impressive victory in the assembly elections, piling up 148,215 votes as against 31,538 votes polled by the Justicites and the stray Independent candidates put together.[4]

The rout of the Justice Party in the legislative assembly elections was a great blow to the Justice leaders. The Raja of Bobbili convened a special meeting of Justicites at his residence on 11 December 1934, to consider their disastrous performance. Even before this meeting the pro-Justice papers had attributed the humiliating defeat to 'disloyalty and treachery' among Justice ranks.[5] The leader of the Non-Brahman Youth League and the Self-Respecters, ascribed the defeat of Shanmugam Chettiar in particular to Muthiah Chettiar's clandestine understanding with the Congress.[6] They argued that Muthiah Chettiar's unanimous election to the municipal mayoralty could not have been possible unless he had promised to accommodate Congress interests in the commerce constituency.[7] These accusations resulted in a no-confidence motion against him at a specially convened party meeting. To counter this, Muthiah Chettiar resigned all his positions in the party. Consequently the no-confidence motion brought against

1 *Hindu*, 12 and 14 November 1934.
2 *Mail*, 20 November 1934.
3 *Hindu*, 12 November 1934.
4 *Hindu*, 20 November 1934.
5 *Samadarsini*, 14 November 1934; *Ms. NNR.*, 1934, p. 600; *Justice*, 12 November 1934.
6 *Hindu*, 15 November 1934.
7 *Puratchi*, 19 November 1934.

him was dropped.[1] The meeting resulted in a split in the Justice Council Party. Towards the end of December 1934 Muthiah Chettiar resigned from the Justice Party. Along with him seven other members of the legislative council tendered their resignations.[2] Under the leadership of Muthiah Chettiar, they formed an Independent party in the council, which reduced the voting strength of the Justice Council Party.

These dramatic developments within the Justice Council Party indicated the possible demoralization of the Justice Party itself. Although the signs of this demoralization were detected soon after the assembly elections, it became manifest in the subsequent by-elections in the city of Madras, Anantapur and Trichinopoly in the first quarter of 1935. In the first two constituencies the Justice Party was uniformly worsted, for the Congress secured over 77 and 63 per cent respectively of the total votes polled.[3] Ratnavelu Tevar, a former Justicite, was elected on the Congress ticket at Trichinopoly. The reduced strength of the Justice Party in the council, its recent election defeat, its unpopularity in the country over the bifurcation of district boards and the policy pursued on the question of land revenue encouraged Subbarayan to move a motion of no-confidence against the ministry on 12 March 1935. As the motion commanded the support of 47 members, more than the required majority of 42, was taken up for discussion on the 14th but was defeated by a margin of 32 votes.[4]

Spurred on by Subbarayan's no-confidence motion, the Justicites took steps to strengthen the council wing of the Justice Party. As a first step, Natesa Mudaliar was nominated as the Justice candidate for the office of the deputy president of the legislative council which had remained vacant for some time. He was elected unanimously on 23 March 1935.[5] This helped to pacify a section of the council Justicites, who were dissatisfied with the failure of the

1 *Mail* and *Hindu*, 11 and 12 December 1934.

2 *Mail*, 20 February 1935.

3 *Hindu*, 20 January 1935; *Krishna Patrika*, 13 April 1935, *Ms. NNR.*, 1935, p. 244.

4 *Hindu*, and *Mail* 12, 15 March 1935; *PMLC*, Vol. LXXXI (March, 1935), p. 450.

5 *Mail*, 23 March 1935.

leadership to recognize Mudaliar's services to non-Brahman movement for over a decade. Secondly, attempts were made to win over to their side, the Justice Democratic Party led by Muniswamy Naidu. To consider the question of reunification and the adoption of Naidu's manifesto, issued before his death in January that year executive committees of both the Justice and the Justice Democratic Party met on 23 March. The manifesto contained among other things, proposals concerning land resettlement and revenue remissions to tenants in zamindari areas. On consideration of these proposals the committees agreed to investigate land tenure problems by appointing a special committee later. It was also agreed that revenue remission in zamindari areas should proceed 'more as a grace than by compulsion', that a central body should be appointed to co-ordinate the activities of panchayat and district boards and that Naidu's scheme of rural development shoud be undertaken without delay. These points were subsequently ratified by the executive committee of both parties, thereby paving the way for the merger of the Justice Democratic Party with the Justice Party. However, some members of the Justice Democratic Party opposed the merger with the Justicites, with whom, nonetheless, they were prepared to co-operate. There was a split over this merger in the Justice Democratic Party; seven out of eleven of its members joined the Justice Council Party towards the end of March. This was followed by the extinction of the Justice Democratic Party.[1]

Efforts were also made to improve the strength and popularity of the Justice Party outside the council. At a Justice meeting held at Ooty on 4 June 1935, suggestions to establish a chain of vernacular newspapers throughout the presidency and to hire speakers to counter the Congress propaganda were considered.[2] The first proposal was regarded impracticable because of the large capital investment and constant subvention required. Appointment of paid agents was viewed as undesirable. However, at a subsequent meeting held on 17 June, alternative suggestions were made, such as the revival of the local committees and the conversion of Naicker's Tamil bi-weekly, *Viduthalai*, into a daily.[3] Proposals were made for the holding of periodical conferences in different districts to

1 *Mail* and *Hindu*, 23 March 1935.

2 *Hindu* and *Mail*, 4 June 1935.

2 *Mail*, 17 June 1935.

enthuse the party workers, to explain to the electors the party's contribution to the constitutional progress of the country, to examine Congress policies of civil disobedience and boycott of the legislatures and show how they impeded political progress. It was also recommended that the Ministers should be in close contact with the masses and that taluk boards should be reanimated.[1]

The leaders of the Justice Party did not carry out these suggestions; they only agreed to convene district conferences before the end of 1935. Provincial conferences were held in South Arcot, Salem, Chingleput and Madura districts before the end of October. A conference, specifically for the district leaders in the Tamil districts, was also held in July to consider the possibility of opening new branch offices and enrolling new members in the party.[2] In the absence of official records, neither the data relating to newly opened branch offices nor newly enrolled members are available. No official records, for that matter, are available regarding the then existing branch offices or the number of registered members in each branch. Nevertheless, the proceedings of the public meetings reported in *Kudi Arasu*, *Viduthalai* and the *Justice* of this period, indicate that regular propaganda meetings were held in increasing numbers in various centres of the province.

Though the Justicites organized propaganda meetings, their inability to make speeches in vernacular languages left such meetings open to domination by the members of the Self-Respect movement. Very few of the leading Tamil Justicites were articulate in Tamil, although this was not the case with their Telugu counterparts. Consequently the Tamil leaders depended on the Self-Respecters to translate their speeches at public meetings. Self-Respecters, like Balasubramaniam, Gurusami and later C. N. Annadurai translated English speeches of Ramaswami Mudaliar and Rajan into Tamil for their audiences.[3] The Self-Respecters themselves addressed a number of public meetings on behalf of the Justice Party. They addressed, between 8 and 12 July 1935, 22 public meetings in different parts of the Tamil districts.[4] The

1 *Mail*, 2 July 1935.

2 *Mail*, 17 July 1935; *Kudi Arasu*, 28 July 1935.

3 Interview with Balasubramaniam on 28 July 1969.

4 *Kudi Arasu*, 14 July 1935.

audience looked for a faithful account of past achievements and future policies of the Justice Party, but to their disappointment the Self-Respecters often distorted its economic and social programmes so that these appeared to be in line with their own views. G. M. Swaminathan, a Self-Respecter, presiding over a Justice Party meeting at Vellore on 10 July, claimed that the Justice Party stood for the abolition of religion and private ownership of wealth, and for the nationalization of all means of production and distribution.[1]

Swaminathan's interpretation of the Justice programme was brought to the attention of senior members of the Justice Party on the 12th. They were put in an awkward position in deciding whether or not to repudiate such claims. On the one hand, they were anxious not to alienate the Self-Respecters' support, and on the other they were keen on correcting the Self-Respecter's distorted version of the party programme in the minds of the public. When the press reporters interviewed Natesa Mudaliar, he did not give any credence to the speech of Swaminathan, but restated the party policy as one of raising the economic and social status of all communities through democratic processes. The party, he said, neither subscribed to the economic theories of Communism nor upheld the atheistic beliefs of individual members. The editor of *Justice*, T. A. V. Nathan, said that the Self-Respect movement was a wing of the Justice Party, but, for all that, statements concerning the Justice policies should always be made by its leaders and not by individuals like Swaminathan.[2]

The Justicites' stand was interpreted by the Self-Respecters as a complete rejection of the Erode Programme. They said that the informal agreement reached between Ramasami Naicker and the Raja of Bobbili should be honoured by all other Justicites, otherwise the Self-Respecters would not campaign for the Justice Party. At a Justice Party Workers' conference, held at Madura on 12 August, the Self-Respecters gave an ultimatum that unless the executive committee of the Justice Party agreed to accept the Erode Programme in full they would withhold their support.[3]

---

1 *Mail*, 12 July 1935; *Kudi Arasu*, 14 July 1935.

2 *Mail*, 12 July 1935; *Swadesamitran*, 13 July 1935.

3 *Kudi Arasu*, 18 August 1935; *Mail*, 13 August 1935.

The leaders of the Justice Party, as expected, assured them that the Erode Programme would be adopted and incorporated in the general programme of the party at the forthcoming meeting of the executive committee. Their assurances were, however, not given effect to until November 1935, as the leaders of the Justice Party were engaged in studying the proposals contained in the Government of India Bill, which, with some modifications, became an Act on 2 August 1935. The main principles embodied in this Act were (i) the formation of an All India Federation comprising the governors' provinces, the chief commissioners' provinces and the Federating Indian States and (ii) the awarding of provincial autonomy in the governors' provinces, with a government responsible to an elected legislature. The legislature in the governors' provinces would be a bi-cameral body consisting of a legislative assembly and a council. The Act did not satisfy the expectations of Indian politicians. However, the Constitutionalists, including the Justicites, agreed that provisions relating to the governors' provinces were less objectionable than those for the central legislature, and that even though the former contained many safeguards in favour of the public services and minorities, a certain amount of autonomy was vested in provincial executives and legislatures. The 'special powers' given to the governor-general and the governors were objected to even by the Constitutionalists, because they considered those powers as limitations on responsible government.[1]

The Justicites were fully aware of the limitations imposed by the new Act, but they were prepared to work within it 'in a spirit of good-will to create the necessary sanction for the early revision of the scheme of Reforms', a revision which would be more in keeping with the expectations and demands of the public.[2] Not only were they ready to work the new Act at the provincial level but also at the national level. To achieve this aim, they suggested the formation of a Federal Party to bring British India and the Indian States together in governing the federation. Similar suggestions also came from constitutionalists like Sir H. P. Modi.[3] Ramaswami Mudaliar, who favoured the work-

1 *Mail* and *Hindu*, 21 August 1935.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

ing of the federation as proposed in the Act, went a step further in suggesting to the Justice Party the need to send 'missionaries to work in different provinces and bring (about) a Federal Party into existence.' He emphasised these views again in his speeches delivered at Tanjore and Trichinopoly on 20 and 22 August 1935 respectively. In those two speeches he said that steps should be taken forthwith to form a Federal Party and that the people should be educated on the importance of working the new constitution. The successful working of the constitution, in his view, 'would enable them to obtain the necessary sanction for greater and better schemes of reform'.[1]

Ramaswami Mudaliar's arguments favouring the formation of a Federal Party were received without enthusiasm by other leaders of the Justice Party. Two possible explanations can be given for it. In the first instance, their earlier attempts to organize an All India party with the help of non-Brahman leaders in other provinces had failed, and, secondly, the Justice Party's popularity in Madras Province itself was on the decline. In the 1920's Justice Party leaders had maintained a loose alliance with non-Brahman leaders in Bombay, the United Provinces and Mysore, but that did not result in the emergence of a national party. This was because of their limited social and political objectives, intended specifically to serve their own provincial needs, and of their involvement in working the dyarchic system of government.[2] All the same, in 1933-34 the Justicites had attempted to organize a party at All-India level and failed owing to the rout of their party in the assembly elections.[3] This debacle shook the confidence of the Justicites in their own political future and the manifestation of this weakness became evident in their successive defeats in the council by-elections.[4] Although the signs of recovery were noticeable in their increased organizational activity within the priovince, they doubted by the usefulness of enlarging their activity further without first formulating a workable programme, and, secondly, consolidating the party at the provincial level. Some Justicites said that questions relating to the formation

---

1 *Mail*, 21 and 23 August 1935; *Hindu*, 23 August 1935.

2 Interview with Balasubramaniam on 28 July 1969.

3 Ibid.

of a Federal Party could be taken up only when the Justice Party obtained a majority in the new provincial legislative assembly, and others considered that the crying need of the hour was to reorganize the Justice Party[1] to meet the challenge from the Congress. The provincial leaders of the Congress had already passed a resolution at their Madras District Political Conference, held on 29 July 1935, requesting the AICC to remove the ban on council entry and acceptance of office.[2]

The impact of the provincial Congress leaders' decision was noticeable on Justice circles. On 6 October 1935, the Andhra Districts Justice Party conference was convened at Guntur, where questions relating to organization of propaganda committees and the means of financing them were considered. Under the chairmanship of the Raja of Bobbili, a central propaganda committee for the Andhra districts was formed.[3] A decision to raise one crore of rupees for the election fund was taken and at the conference itself, nearly ninety thousand rupees were collected.[4] In the case of Tamil districts no such central propaganda committees was formed, though propaganda boards had already been established even before the Andhra districts conference was convened. Detailed information regarding the number of propaganda committees formed both in the Tamil and the Andhra districts or the amount of money collected for the election fund is not available. However, the Justice leaders' decision to organize district committees seems to have been largely accomplished within six weeks of the Andhra districts conference, which gave enough time to consider other pressing matters, including the adoption of the Erode Programme.[5]

The executive committee of the Justice Party, which met on 15 November 1935 in Madras, discussed Naicker's programme of work submitted earlier. The draft programme taken up for discussion was a re-draft of the Ten Point Programme[6] which had been submitted to the executive committee, but was not considered for want

1 *Mail*, 21 August 1935.
2 *Mail* and *Hindu*, 29 August 1935.
3 *Mail*, 7 October 1935; *Justice*, 8 October 1935.
4 *Mail*, 7 October 1935; *Justice*, 9 October 1935.
5 Interview with Balasubramaniam on 28 July 1969.
6 See Appendix 6

of time, at its meeting on 1 October 1934. The present one included all the proposals except the one related to religion. Item six of the original programme envisaged that the government should be secular and that the policies of the bureaucracy should not be influenced by considerations of religion or caste.[1] Though the omission of this item was deliberate, the Self-Respecters did not object to it, considering the adverse effect it would have on the political future of the Justice Party.[2] On account of this, the re-drafted programme was accepted without much discussion for incorporation in the general programme. At that meeting, a committee, consisting of the Raja of Bobbili, Ramasami Naicker and others was formed to prepare a draft programme to be submitted to the executive committee scheduled to meet in January 1936.[3] But the programme was not drafted, and the executive committee did not meet in January as planned.

The Justice Party's decision to adopt Naicker's programme was criticized by the leaders of the TNCC and a section of the Self-Respecters led by Ramanathan. Though the line of their attack was different, the aim was obvious. Neither wanted the Justice Party to adopt the Self-Respect programme. The Tamilnad Congress leaders realized that the Justicites could count on the mass support at the elections, especially with that part of the Self-Respect programme which dealt with the proposals to relieve the indebtedness of agriculturists, to implement a scheme of compulsory education and prohibition, to bring under state control and management all public utilities and to 'ensure a minimum living wage' for all.[4] At the first instance, therefore, the Congress leaders took the offensive in asking the Justicites to specify what preliminary work they had done over a decade in office in order to implement the scheme of compulsory elementary education and the abolition of the sale of liquor. Satyamurti, the then president of TNCC in a speech at Madras on 19 November 1935 averred that the recently adopted programme of the Justice Party was none other than the programme framed at the Karachi Session of Congress in 1913 and compared the former to 'stolen rags' from the Congress camp which the Justicites

1 See Appendix 5

2 Interview with Sivagnanam on 10 September 1969.

3 *Mail* and *Hindu*, 15 November 1935.

4 *Justice*, 19 November 1935; *Ms. NNR.*, 1935, p. 629.

could not wear but would use to 'deceive others.'[1] On the other hand Ramanathan opposed Naicker's efforts because he neither liked the idea of the Self-Respect movement becoming active in politics nor its organization being used to strengthen the Justicite hold in the province. He had severed his connection with the Tamilnad branch of the Indian National Congress in 1927, for what he considered to be its communal bias, though at heart he was a nationalist with sympathy for the political aspirations of the Congress. Besides, he had an idealistic view of the functions of the Self-Respect movement in society and wished to see it turned into a great social movement, devoting its energy to shaping the cultural life of the people on non-sectarian lines, removing the inegalitarian aspects of the institution of caste and religion in society. Ramanathan's view had, however, been discredited at Erode in 1932. Still he had hoped that Naicker would not allow the movement to drift into party politics, but when this hope was dashed,[2] he said,

> The (Self-Respect) movement will not bend to the purposes of E. V. Ramasami Naicker .. The movement has introduced a new element of social service which cuts right across the border lines of existing political parties. Any attempt, therefore, to exploit the Self-Respect movement for narrow political purposes will redound to the discredit of those who do so.[3]

Ramanathan lost his faith in Naicker and left the party for good along with his followers in 1935, but their exact number could not be ascertained in the absence of records.[4]

Naicker was not disconcerted by the split in the ranks of the Self-Respect movement. Nor did he change his political stance to accommodate those who opposed his alliance with the Justice Party. Even before the Justicites could accept the Erode Programme he had decided to support them because the political climate in the province warranted that he should stand by the Justice Party. Although it was in office, all the influential newspapers 'fanatically opposed' it, partly for its political policy, which

1 *Hindu* and *Swadesamitran*, 19 November 1935.
2 Interview with Ramanathan on 14 November 1969.
3 *Mail*, 16 November 1935.
4 Ramanathan became the Minister for Public Information and Administration Reports in Rajaji's Ministry from 15 July 1937 to 29 October 1939.

was antithetical to that of the Congress, and partly for 'communal considerations'. In Naicker's evaluation, the Justicites' policy of opposing the immediate devolution of political power was pragmatic, considering the 'persistent fear' of the emergence of Brahman oligarchy.[1] The landslide victory of the Congress in the central legislative assembly and in the council by-elections increased not only its prospects of coming to power in the province, but strengthened Naicker's suspicion also. To him, Congress rule was nothing but the rule of Brahmans, who had been dominating and leading the provincial Congress since its inception. This explained the Brahmans' strong support of the Congress. Their solidarity revealed itself at the time of the elections in the places where Brahmans contested on Congress tickets. Satyamurti, who stood for the central legislative assembly election from the Madras city constituency, seems to have told a public meeting at Mylapore that he would count his votes not from one but from 5,000, because he was assured of all the 5,000 and odd Brahman votes of that constituency.[2] Though the credibility of this statement cannot be confirmed by the available material, Naicker himself conceded that the slogan of *purna swaraj* swung the electors, especially non-Brahmans, in favour of Congress. But in the case of Brahmans he said one of the impelling motives in exercising their franchise in favour of Congress was to 'stage a monopolist revival in the administration' of the province.[3] Prompted perhaps by these considerations, Naicker decided to strengthen the hands of the Justice Party, although it was on the decline.

Naicker's support of the Justicites in no way improved their performance in the district board elections held in the last quarter of 1935 and in the first half of 1936. The Justice Party met with a crushing defeat in all the district board elections, except in Kurnool, Anantapur and Chittoor.[4] In South Arcot, which was believed to be a stronghold of the party, it secured only 11 of the 48 seats on the board and the rest went to the Congress. The number of votes polled there exceeded the expectations of the Congress candidates. In Panruti, Nellikuppam, Cuddalore and Agaram circles, Congress

1 Interview with Sivagnanam on 10 September 1969.
2 Interview with Sivagnanam on 10 September 1969.
3 Interview with Vedachalam, Balasubramaniam and Ramasami Naicker on 27 July, 28 July and 1 June 1969, respectively.
4 *Mail*, 11 November and 24 December 1935.

candidates secured 15,433 out of 19,417 votes, while Justicites and Independents obtained a paltry 3,443. The same story was repeated in other circles also.[1]

Even where the Justicites obtained a working majority, as in Kurnool, Anantapur and Chittoor district boards, they could not elect their own presidents for want of cohesion and unity. Too many aspired to the post of presidentship, which divided their ranks and resulted in defeat. The local Justice executive committee also found itself in a dilemma when too many competed for the presidentship. And in such cases, it supported only the tried Justicites in order to avoid charges of favouritism. But others, who failed to obtain the party backing, were prepared to shed their political identity and join the Congress, provided they held office in public bodies. The local Congress leaders were prepared to accommodate them, if only they crossed the floor.

Such tactics had a telling effect on the election of presidents of district boards where the Justicites had a majority. Eight Justicites at Kurnool, six at Anantapur and three in Chittoor district boards crossed the floor and it resulted in the defeat of the official Justice candidates.[2] In places like Tinnevelly and Trichinopoly, Congress leaders employed certain 'sharp practices' to get a foothold in traditional Justice strongholds. Justice candidates, who had filed their nominations, were approached with the offer of being left unopposed in the elections if only they signed the Congress creed. At Tinnevelly, for example, M. D. T. Kumaraswami Mudaliar, a leading Justicite, signed the Congress creed a day before the district board presidentship election on 23 November 1935, and got himself elected president on the Congress ticket.[3] Such tactics were disgusting even to Congressmen like M. S. V. Chari, who commented that, though the success of Congress candidates in district board elections was 'gratifying', the policy adopted by the Congress Civic Board in selecting candidates other than 'real Congressmen' was discreditable.[4]

The district board elections brought home to the leaders of the Justice Party the fact that the forces of disintegration could not be

1 *Hindu* and *Mail*, 23 December 1935; *Mail*, 28 December 1935.
2 *Hindu* and *Mail*, 24 December 1935.
3 *Mail*, 25 November 1935.
4 *Mail*, 9 January 1936.

checked, however much they tried. Disgruntled Justicites, who had been in the background for want of an alternative party, became very active when the provincial Congress declared its intention to contest all elections and assume responsibility at all levels of the government in order to prevent communal groups dominating the political life of the country. To exploit the new opportunities available in the Congress, discontented Justicites, who had some following in their party, donned *khaddar* clothes. The Congress, in its eagerness to tighten its grip on the local bodies, was willing to accommodate such 'turncoats' in its ranks. Their disloyalty no doubt disrupted and weakened the Justice organization at the grassroots, but it also contributed to de-Brahmanize the lower levels of Congress leadership till then in the hands of Brahmans. The Justicites, although unhappy over their debacle in the local board elections, rejoiced at the prospect of non-Brahmans gaining control of the Congress. This was borne out by the speeches of Justicites themselves, who, when they addressed a public meeting at Madras on 20 January 1936, said that the recent elections in the districts were a great victory, if not for the Justice Party at least for non-Brahman movement, because every President elected was a non-Brahman and an ex-Justicite.[1]

The crushing defeat sustained by the Justice Party in the district board elections had a psychological effect on the Justicites. Veterans like Natesa Mudaliar doubted the political future of the Justice Party and freely talked in terms of merging it with the Congress provided it accepted the principle of communal representation in government services for at least 20 years or more.[2] Naicker who shared his views, met Rajaji on 3 June 1936, and had an informal talk with him regarding the possibility of coming to an understanding over the question of communal representation in public services. Neither Rajaji nor the TNCC was willing to accede to this request.[3] Nevertheless Naicker was in a mood at this stage to join the congress provided it accepted the principle of communal representation and the social reconstruction programme of the Justice Party, and gave an undertaking that they would not undo what the Justice Party had done so far. Statements like

1 *Mail*, 20 January 1936.

2 *Mail*, 6 and 7 January 1936.

3 *Mail* and *Hindu*, 3 June 1936.

these issued by the Self-Respecters and some of the Justicites indicated their misgivings regarding future political viability of the Justice Party.[1]

At that time the Justice organization itself was threatened with a split, because of misunderstanding between the Raja of Bobbili and some of the prominent leaders over policy matters and issues affecting personal interests. This contributed further to the dislocation of the organizational work in connection with the forthcoming elections to the reorganized local council. Firstly, the Raja of Bobbili's agrarian policy to improve the general condition of zamin ryots was stoutly opposed by some zamindars, including the Raja of Kallikote, for economic reasons. But when they saw their leader's determination to thrust the agrarian reform bills down their throats, they had no alternative but to resign from the Justice Party. Secondly, Reddi Naidu, a former minister for Development in the first Justice ministry, worked against the larger interests of the party, because the party leadership was opposed to his sister's nomination to the East Godavari district board, and to his own nomination as the Law Member of the Government of Madras. Thirdly, Patro's differences with the Raja over the abolition of taluk boards were quite well-known. Patro's criticisms against the Justice Ministry's handling of the affairs of the local bodies provided the necessary ammunition for the propaganda guns of the provincial Congress. And finally, the Maharaja of Pithapuram's personal differences with the Raja of Bobbili and the former's consequent decision to start a separate party damaged the organizational activities of the Justicites.[2]

A strong challenge to the Justice Party came undoubtedly from the Maharaja of Pithapuram, on the eve of the elections. He organized the People's Party and brought it into existence on 25 July 1936. The main objectives of his party, as explained by the Maharaja on the inaugural day, were to work the new constitution in order to get the maximum benefit out of it and also to get it amended or replaced by one that would give India full democratic self-government, to protect the fundamental rights of the people, to promote goodwill and fellowship among the various communities in India

1 *Mail*, 2 July 1936.

2 Nilkan A. Perumal, *Bobbili: Being a Biography of Sri Varu Sri Ramakrishna Swatchelapathi Ranga Rao, the 13th Raja of Bobbili* (Madras, 1960), p. 118.

and to secure social and political justice for all classes and communities consistent with the paramount national interests.'[1] The party was open to all communities and it claimed to be non-communal. Although it condemned the Indian National Congress policy of non-co-operation and its persistently proclaimed intention of wrecking the constitution from within the legislatures, the People's Party posed a threat not to the Congress but to the Justice Party in the province.

The leaders of the Justice Party were faced with defections from their ranks to the People's Party. Even those regarded as members of the inner circle of the Raja of Bobbili, like K. M. Balasubramaniam, fell away from loyalty to become the 'drummer-boys of the People's Party'.[2] The lure of money was too much to resist, for Pithapur spent over 20 lakhs of rupees to popularize the party in order to fight the election in February 1937. Furthermore, positions were offered to competent renegades, attractive pay was given to seasoned propagandists and even election expenses were promised to those Justicites who would be willing to stand on the People's Party ticket.[3] To popularize the party creed, newspapers in English, Tamil and Telugu were started simultaneously. Their tone was anti-Justice because the 'prime intention of Pithapur', according to Iswar Dutt, the editor of the English organ of the People's Party, the *People's Voice*, was to fight the Justice Party led by the Raja of Bobbili whom he heartily disliked.'[4]

---

1 *Mail* and *Hindu*, 25 July 1936.

2 On 15 August 1935, twelve young Justicites, including K. M. Balasubramaniam formed themselves into what was then called the Young Justicites' League, owing allegiance only to the Raja of Bobbili, the leader of the Justice Party. They were administered an oath to the effect that they would be faithful and bear true allegiance to the leader, the Raja of Bobbili, that they would loyally carry out his instructions issued from time to time; that they would faithfully discharge their duties as Justicites and that they would abide by the rules and regulations of the Young Justicites' League. Prominent among the twelve, who included K. M. Balasubramaniam, were P. Balasubramania Mudaliar, T. A. V. Nathan, G. Lakshminarasiah, V. Hanumantha Rao and W. V. Kesavalu. *Mail*, 15 August 1935.

3 Interview with one of the leading members of the defunct Justice Party on 5 June 1969. He preferred to remain anonymous. Also see Nilkan A. Perumal, *Bobbili*, pp. 118-9.

4 Nilkan A. Perumal, *Bobbili*, p. 119.

The campaigns of People's Party against the Justice Party brought the Raja of Bobbili out of his ivory tower into the election field. Extensive tours in Andhra districts were undertaken by him to review the progress made by the district committees in organizational work connected with the polls. On 20 September he addressed a mammoth public meeting at Bezwada, where he outlined the Justice Party's future programme of work for the development of the province. He said that the village development schemes would be given top priority such as providing them with an adequate supply of drinking water, warehouse facilities for storing grain and cheap electricity for the development of small scale agro-industries. Further, he said that government services would be increasingly Indianized, salaries of public servants would be raised and a new compulsory elementary education scheme would be introduced, if the party was returned to power.[1] To strengthen the party ranks, he himself showed the way by coming to a compromise with prominent leaders in the Telugu districts, like the Raja of Chellapalli and the Raja of Mirzapur, for the sake of political survival. Although the causes of their differences with the Raja of Bobbili are not clear, their coming together, in Nilkan A. Perumal's view, strengthened the party in the coastal Andhra districts.[2] Muthiah Chettiar, who had been virtually expelled from the party in 1934 on charges arising out of the election of the representative of the Indian commerce constituency, had not only been brought back into the party but was subsequently included in the cabinet in place of Kumaraswami Reddiar, the Minister for Education and Excise, who had resigned on grounds of health on 10 October 1936.[3] Neither the actual cause of the latter's sudden resignation nor the reason for the 'unusual promptitude' with which it was accepted is known. One of the vernacular newspapers, *Prachanda Vikatan*,

1 *Mail* and *Hindu*, 21 September 1936; Nilkan A. Perumal, *Bobbili*, p. 114.

2 Nilkan A. Perumal, *Bobbili*, p. 114.

3 On 11 December 1935, under a compromise formula suggested by Mohamed Usman, Muthiah Chettiar joined the Justice Party again, dissolving his Independent Council Party. According to the formula, the executive committee of the Justice Party expunged the offending minutes relating to Chettiar's disloyalty to the party at the assembly election. *Hindu* and *Mail*, 11 December 1935. Again Chettiar's inclusion in the Justice Cabinet was largely due to Mohamed Usman. Nilkan A. Perumal, *Bobbili*, pp. 111-12.

however, commented that there must be 'some mystery' behind the sudden change in the personnel of the Ministry.[1] Muthiah Chettiar's appointment was interpreted as the Raja of Bobbili's 'statesmanship' in conciliating moneyed interests in order to strengthen the party in Ramnad district, where Nattukkottai Chettiars were dominant. Jawaharlal Nehru, who was then touring the Province as the president of the Indian National Congress, commented at Coimbatore on 12 October on the changes in the personnel of the Ministry, interpreting them as a measure to secure financial help for the Justice Party to fight the coming elections.[2]

Despite the Raja of Bobbili's personal interest in reorganizing the party, neither its image nor its prospects improved in the elections to the reorganized local council, which according to the Government of India Act of 1935 would be known as the legislative assembly. This was attributed by some Justicites to the persistent hostility exhibited by the newspapers which were either owned or monopolized by Brahmans in the province.[3] Some newspapers, motivated by 'genuine national considerations' were opposed to the Justice policy of co-operation with the *Raj* because, in their view, it was inconsistent with the political aspirations of a large section of the people of the country. Others were 'plainly hostile', as indicated by Nilkan A. Perumal, for they considered that the Justice Ministries' administrative policies were so restrictive in nature as to promote only sectional interests in society.[4] Consequently, the tone and style of these newspapers became increasingly antagonistic towards the Justice Party, tarnishing its image in order to alienate public sympathy. The *Swadesamitran*, for example, exploited Muthiah Chettiar's appointment as Minister for Education and Excise, to show to the people that the Justicites were motivated by power to the extent of sacrificing even personal honour, and that the party itself was dominated by zamindars and moneyed interests.[5] Furthermore, the nationalist newspapers in general extolled the Congress leaders' personal sacrifices and sufferings during the campaigns of non-co-operation, so as to exploit public

1 *Prachanda Vikatan*, 15 October 1936; *Ms. NNR.*, 1936, p. 602.

2 *Andhra Patrika*, 12 October 1936; *Ms. NNR.*, 1936, p. 603.

3 Interview with Balasubramaniam on 28 July 1969.

4 Nilkan A. Perumal, *Bobbili*, pp. 122-23.

5 *Swadesamitran*, 12 October 1936.

sympathy to the great disadvantage of the Justicites, who had no such record to boast of. The Congress propagandists, like Satyamurti, swayed the electors with appeals to emotion rather than to reason. They invoked the name of Mahatma Gandhi, the 'seductive music' which had lured the 'uninstructed into the depths of Nationalism.'[1] As opposed to the Justicites, Congress propagandists made the issues simpler while addressing the electors. They analysed neither the Justice manifesto nor their own. Instead Congressmen stressed that the election was a crucial one as the fight was not between the Congress and the Justice Party but between the forces of nationalism and the forces of oppression; between those advocating Dominion status and those proclaiming political independence for the country; between British bureaucracy and the Indian National Congress.[2]

The emotional appeal of the Congress, the hostility of the press, and the People's Party entry as a third force, contributed to the crushing defeat of the Justice Party in the Madras Assembly election, held on 18 February 1937. The provincial branch of the Indian National Congress emerged victorious, unseating almost all the leading Justicites, and securing 159 out of 219 seats in the provincial Legislative Assembly. Prominent Justice members went down like ninepins, including the Raja of Bobbili and Rajan. The former was defeated by V. V. Giri in the Vizagapatam rural constituency by a majority of over 6,000 votes, and the latter was unseated by R. Sakthivadivel Gounder by a huge margin of over 15,000 votes. The Justice Party itself was reduced to insignificance, with only 17 members in the newly elected Madras Legislative Assembly.[3]

The leaders of the Tamilnad branch of the Indian National Congress at a special meeting convened on 10 March 1937 considered the people's verdict. They agreed that the result of the election was unambiguous and that they should accept ministerial responsibilities with a view to carrying out the policy of the Congress and the programmes outlined in its manifesto, as otherwise the people would be disappointed. The provincial Congress Committee decided unanimously in favour of accepting office, provided the 'special

1 K. M. Balasubramaniam, *South Indian Celebrities*, Vol. II, p. 53.

2 Nilkan A. Perumal, *Bobbili*, pp. 124-25.

3 *Hindu* and *Mail*, 27 February 1937.

powers' vested in the governors of provinces were not used against the Congress Ministry when it tried to give effect to the Congress programmes. After haggling over this restrictive provision, enshrined in the Constitutional Act of 1935, for over four months,[1] the first Congress Ministry took office in the Province of Madras under the leadership of Rajaji on 14 July 1937.

II

A section of non-Brahmans viewed the formation of the Congress Ministry under Rajaji's leadership as an indication of the resurgence of Brahman domination in the political affairs of the province, considering the disproportionate number of Brahmans in the ministry and the key positions they held. Out of the ten ministers and ten council secretaries four of each were Brahmans. Among them they shared all the important portfolios in the ministry. T. S. S. Rajan, a Śrivaiṣhṇava, and T. Prakasam, an Andhra Brahman, were elected as leaders of the legislative council and the assembly respectively. Another Andhra Brahman, Bulusu Sambamurthi was elected as the Speaker of the Lower House known as the legislative assembly.[2] Therefore soon after the formation of the ministry posters in Tamil characterizing it as 'Brahman Raj' appeared in various parts of the city of Madras. The English rendering of one of the posters may be given here.

> Oh! Tamils!
> Have you no shame?
> Have you no courage?
> In the name of Congress, Brahman
>   Raj has been established
> Alas! What will be your fate?[3]

---

1 During this period an interim Ministry was formed under the leadership of Sir K. V. Reddi Nayudu. The Ministry consisted of six members including Nayudu, Rao Bahadur A. T. Pannirselvam, Muthiah Chettiar, Rao Bahadur M. C. Raja, Khan Bahadur P. Khalifulla Sahib and R. M. Palat. The Ministry was in power from 1 April to 14 July 1937. *Mail* and *Hindu*, 30 March and 1 April 1937 respectively; M. R. O. *Public* G.O.No. 835, 16 May 1938.

2 *Sunday Observer*, 10 July 1938; *Mail*, 14 July 1937.

3 *Mail*, 19 July 1937.

A section of non-Brahmans in the TNCC also charged Rajaji with partiality for Brahmans. They did not object to the large number of Brahmans included in the ministry. Nor did they question their competence but they certainly disapproved of Rajan's appointment to the cabinet. In August 1936, he had defied the TNCC mandate in the election of the chairmanship of Trichinopoly municipality and successfully put up a candidate in opposition to the official Congress nominee. His action had then been condemned by all the important figures in the TNCC including Rajaji. Both the provincial and the All-India Congress Working Committees had censured Rajan's rebellious attitude. As a result of this and his own differences of opinion with the Congress high-command, Rajan had resigned from the TNCC and all public positions he held as a Congressman.[1] Rajaji shocked at what he called the 'growing indiscipline even among the tried Congressmen', had resigned from the Congress on 11 August the same year. Explaining his resignation in a statement, he had said then that he no longer had the power to serve the Congress usefully, and the defection of Rajan was nothing less than a 'signal for the general indiscipline in the Congress ranks and the refusal of loyalty whenever irksome.'[2] Despite this Rajaji nominated Rajan as a member of the legislative council and appointed him as minister for health. By way of explanation Rajaji said, 'I included Dr. Rajan's name in the list of ministers on a stroke of inspiration and his non-inclusion would have been suicidal.[3] Many Congressmen not only criticized Rajaji's statement but disapproved the method by which Rajan was made a member of the cabinet. S. Narayanaswamy Raja, a member of Lalgudi Taluq Congress Committee addressed a letter to the president of the AICC urging him to enquire into the circumstances that led to the inclusion of Rajan in the cabinet, otherwise his appointment would be misconstrued as an act of patronage politics and would smack of communalism.[4] But others like S. V. Ramaswami, a foreign-trained lawyer and the secretary of Dharmapuram District Board Congress Party, gave a communal

1 *Mail* and *Hindu*, 25 August 1936.

2 *Hindu* and *Mail*, 11 August 1936.

3 *Hindu*, 16 July 1937.

4 NMML., *A.I.C.C.* and *Tamilnadu Pradesh Congress Committee correspondences*: File. No. P. L. 3 Pt. I Letter dated 16 July 1937.

twist to Rajan's appointment. His letter accusing Rajaji of perpetrating sectarianism and autocracy in body-politic was first published in the *Sunday Observer* on 10 July 1938 and a Tamil version of it appeared in Naicker's *Viduthalai* on 26 July 1938. Although the tone of the letter was immoderate, the points he raised were pertinent to the issues involved. He contended that the inclusion of Subbarayan and Ramanathan, the Self-Respecter, could not be reasoned out and that they were evidently the 'personal preferences' of Rajaji. Rajan's appointment on the other hand was an exposition of Rajaji's sectarianism.[1] On Rajan's appointment S. V. Ramaswami wrote:

> The nomination of Dr. T. S. S. Rajan, a gentleman belonging to the same sub-sect as the leader, for the special purpose of making him the Leader of the Upper House and a Minister, is a very bad precedent. Are there no competent handsin the Upper House among the elected members? It is a gross insult to them and a still grosser insult to the non-Brahman members of that House. Dr. Rajan is a person against whom disciplinary action had been taken. If his disobedience and disloyalty are so lightly to be treated, with what grace could the leader enforce discipline against other members?[2]

While one segment of non-Brahmans were thus concerned with the composition of the personnel of the ministry, others viewed the Congress rule, not from a narrow sectarian point of view but from the broader perspective of how its administration

1 NMML., *Nehru's letter to the TNCC president, dated* 2 October 1937; *File No.* 19 (11), 1937, p. 2 (?)

2 *Sunday Observer*, 10 July 1938; For writing this trenchant letter Ramaswami was suspended from the TNCC for three years but he appealed to Nehru to quash the suspension order. He did write to the president of the TNCC to reconsider the matter. Though Nehru considered that Ramaswami's letter was a 'sheer vituperation of the most personal kind', the action taken against him was too severe, if that was 'meant to debar him even from the ordinary membership of the Congress for three years'. There was in fact a protracted correspondence between Ramaswami and other officials of the Congress both at the AICC and TNCC levels. For full details see: (NMML.; *AICC* and *Tamil* Nadu Pradesh Congress Committee Correspondences, File No. 19 (11), 1937, pp. I to VI and 1 to 4.)

would affect the political and cultural interests of the province. The provincial Congress, in contrast to the Justice Party, was a branch of the Indian National Congress and as such it was bound by the policies framed and decisions taken at the national level, no matter how unsuitable they might be to local conditions. The local leaders were no doubt represented in the Congress Working Committee and other policy making organs of the Indian National Congress, but their number was too limited to exert any influence in modifying or annulling its decisions. In such committees very few among the provincial leaders, except Rajaji and to a lesser extent Satyamurti and Prakasam, commanded influence. As such they functioned rather as executers of the Congress programmes, however detrimental to the local interests they might be, than as policy makers of their own regions. As viewed by one Justicite, the power to determine the general policies of the Congress organization rested in the hands of leaders who came largely from North India, while the provincial leaders in the South distinguished themselves in executing these policies passively.[1]

A section of non-Brahman leaders, therefore, saw in the advent of Congress rule, the impending domination of North Indian leaders in the general politics of the province. This the Self-Respecters and the Justicites wanted to avoid because in their view North Indian domination would be nothing short of the domination of Āryans. To the Self-Respecters, particularly, both the North Indians and the local Brahmans were the direct progeny of Āryans, whose style of life was different from that of the Dravidians. Since in the Madras Province the Brahmans controlled and led the Congress, the local Congress leaders like Rajaji, Satyamurti and others were looked upon as agents of North Indian Āryans who had commanding influence on national politics. Consequently, those who were opposed to the Congress were apprehensive of the rule of Congress as the cultural and political monopoly of the North over the South.

Their fear was strengthened by the language policy pursued by Rajaji ministry soon after it was formed in July 1937. Rajaji vaguely outlined the language policy at a meet-the-press session

1 Interview with Balasubramaniam on 28 July 1969. The same view was expressed by Ramasami Naicker when the writer interviewed him on 1 June 1969.

two days before the formation of the ministry on 12 July. At that meeting, he stressed the need for a common language and spoke of the 'fitness' of Hindi to be the *lingua franca* of the country.[1] Within a fortnight after constituting the ministry he again emphasized the 'uniqueness of Hindi' as the only language suitable to become the common language of the country and at the same time he spoke of its affinity to Sanskrit, 'the language of the common culture of India.'[2] On 11 August he announced to the press that Hindi would be introduced as a 'compulsory course of study 'in the school curriculum for the first three forms.[3]

The proposal to introduce Hindi as a compulsory subject in the lower forms was not part of the general programme of the Congress. However the Congress manifesto issued before the 1937 election had stated, without specifying the details, that the Congress would endeavour to spread Hindi if it formed the ministry in the provinces. This language policy of the Congress was based on Gandhi's concept of *swadeshi*, which was to replace English by Hindi as the common language of the country.[4] In advocating this policy neither Gandhi nor other Congress leaders minimized the role of English as the language of administration and politics and as the communication medium of the intelligentsia in various linguistic region of the country. On the other hand they appreciated the importance of English as a window on the outside world through which India could assimilate modern ideas and they were also prepared to use it as the language of 'international diplomacy.'[5] However they were neither prepared to give it what they called the status of the 'common language'

1 *Mail*, 12 July 1937.

2 *Mail*, 25 July 1937.

3 *Mail* and *Hindu*, 11 August 1937.

4 According to Gandhi the term *swadeshi* means 'one's own'. In fact it literally means 'belonging to one's own country, indigenous'. Gandhi used the term not only to indicate the articles produced locally but all those that belonged to the country. For example, *khaddar* and handloom products were *swadeshi* but not the textiles of Britain or Japan. Similarly Indian languages as against English were *swadeshi*. See also *The collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XIII, pp. 70-71.

5 *Young India*, 26 December 1924, quoted in S. Mohan Kumaramangalam *India's Language Crisis* (Madras, 1965), p. 12.

of India, nor anxious to spread it so as to be understood by millions in the country. In its place Hindi was to be installed arbitrarily as the 'common language' not because it was as useful as English but because it was spoken by a large number of Indians and understood by other linguistic groups in the North.[1] In doing this the Congress leadership, which came largely from the North, obviously ignored the linguistic differences between the North and the South and overlooked the strong currents of regionalism which were an outcome of the cultural revivalism that had taken place half a century ago.

In Madras this cultural revivalism manifested itself with the publication of Robert Caldwell's work, *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages*, which revealed the distinguishing features of the Dravidian languages. After the publication of this work English-educated non-Brahmans, as well as some Brahmans, took an interest in reviving the Dravidian languages by interpreting their literature and studying it on modern lines. This revival was shrewdly exploited for political reasons: firstly, by the provincial Congress and, secondly, by the leaders of the Justice Party, although their motives and purposes were different. If the former used it for awakening the nationalist spirit, the latter employed it for narrow political purposes. In this cause Gandhi's interpretation of *swadeshi*, which covered a wide range of things including the

[1] In May 1917, in an article entitled 'Spreading Hindi', Gandhi said, 'Hindi alone can become the common language of the educated people in India.. This place cannot go to English, for it is a foreign language and very difficult for us to learn. The number of those speaking Hindi is almost 65 million. The Bengali, Bihari, Oriya, Marathi, Gujarati, Rajasthani, Punjabi and Sindhi languages are sisters of Hindi. People speaking these languages can understand and speak a little of Hindi. If we include these, the number is almost 220 million'. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XIII, p. 419. On the other hand Jawaharlal Nehru said: 'The only possible all-India language is Hindustani. Already it is spoken by 120 millions and partly understood by scores of millions of people.' Quoted in S. Mohan Kumaramangalam, *India's Language Crisis*, p. 15.

revival of regional languages, came in handy.[1] As a result, since 1917 Tamil had been increasingly used as a vehicle of political expression. C. Subramania Bharati, Varadarajulu Naidu, Kalyanasundara Mudaliar, Rajaji, Satyamurti and other nationalists in Tamilnad contributed their share to vernacularizing politics, chiefly to proselytize the masses to Gandhian politics.[2] Together with these, the Justicites and the Self-Respecters' irresistible appeal to non-Brahmans on racial and communal lines inevitably strengthened the forces of regionalism as well as Tamil nationalism. In 1937 when Hindi was proposed as a subject of study in the schools, this strong regionalism was revealed to the extent of challenging the very concepts of Indian nationalism.

When Hindi was considered fit to take the place of English as the common language of the country, Gandhi anticipated some difficulty in popularizing it in the South, especially among

---

1 At a reception at Mayavaram in May 1915 Gandhi was presented with a welcome address in English, which he resented because it was opposed to the spirit of *swadeshi*. In the course of his reply he said 'I find here words of welcome in the English language. I find in the Congress programme a resolution on *swadeshi*. If you hold that you are *swadeshi* and yet print these in English, then I am not *swadeshi*.. I have nothing to say against the English language. But I do say that, if you kill the vernaculars and raise the English language on the tomb of the vernaculars then you are not favouring *swadeshi* in the right sense of the term'. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XIII, p. 70.

2 The modernization of the Dravidian languages, including Tamil, began with the impact of English education. Deeply influenced by English, the nationalists mentioned took to the task of transforming Tamil into a more pliable language, through which modern ideas of science and politics could be expressed. If C Subramania Bharati (1882-1921) distinguished himself in expressing patriotic sentiments in lyrics, Rajaji endeavoured to coin scientific terms in Tamil, although they had since fallen into disuse. His *Tinnai Racayanam* (Pial Chemistry), is a classic example of his efforts to coin technical terms in Tamil. Whereas Varadarajulu Naidu, Kalyanasundara Mudaliar, Ramasami Naicker and Satyamurti showed by their political speeches that Tamil possessed potentiality as a political tool. Tamil journalism owes its present stature to Kalyanasundara Mudaliar. Eugene F. Irschick, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India*, pp. 303-308.

the people living in the Presidency of Madras[1] whose languages, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada, belong to the Dravidian group and, therefore, are different from the Indo-Āryan family of languages spoken in the North. All the major languages of North India owe their origin to Sanskrit, and Hindi is no exception to this. As Rajaji put it, if one 'clipped the needless draperies of Sanskrit it became Hindustani.'[2] As such it was comparatively easy for other language groups in the North to master Hindi. Southerners were not in that advantageous position, because, despite the sanskritization of Dravidian languages, the impact did not extend beyond the borrowing of a large number of Sanskrit words. In addition to this, the absence of knowledge of Sanskrit among the people of Madras made the spread of Hindi in the Southern region extremely difficult. Gandhi, who was concerned with this linguistic problem, appealed to the Southerners time and again to apply themselves earnestly to the study of Hindi, 'at least an hour a day for one year' in order to 'follow the drift of the Congress proceedings.'[3] In spite of this appeal and the voluntary work undertaken by the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan of Allahabad and other Hindi Prachara Sabhas, the study of Hindi was not pursued seriously by the people of Madras, much to the disappointment of Gandhi and other Congress leaders in the North.

When the Congress came to power for the first time in 1937, the national leadership seems to have insisted on the provincial

1 Gandhi said in May, 1917 that the difficulty in using Hindi for administrative purposes would be felt by people speaking the Dravidian languages, but the remedy could be easier if only Hindi-knowing people who were 'zealous, brave and full of self-respect' took to the cause of spreading Hindi in the South. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XIII, pp. 419-20. Also see Ibid., Vol. XV, p. 241.

2 The terms Hindi and Hindustani were often used synonymously by the Congress politicians, although differences exist between the two languages. According to Gandhi, Hindustani was the resultant blend of Hindi and Urdu. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vols. XV and XVI, pp. 241 and 492 respectively. Some linguistics, however, consider that Hindi has more Sanskrit words than Perso-Arabic words, whereas Hindustani is quite the reverse. To Rajaji it had no relevance, for he did not make any linguistic differences between the two languages in his speeches. *Mail*, 25 July 1937.

3 *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XVI, p. 494.

leadership in Madras espousing the cause of Hindi more seriously in the province. This was rather obliquely borne out by the utterances of Rajaji and those who were opposed to the proposal to introduce Hindi in the curriculum. Besides, Rajaji himself had given an undertaking at a private meeting of the All India Congress leaders that he would introduce Hindi as a compulsory language in the province.[1] He gave the pledge for two reasons: firstly, he was committed to implement the party's language policy, and secondly, he was concerned that the Southerners should not be placed at a disadvantage in shaping the affairs of federated India for want of adequate knowledge of Hindi. His anxiety for the political future of the people of Madras was revealed when he delivered the inaugural address of the Madras Christian College Union in August 1937. He said,

> We shall find ourselves handicapped and unable to take part in the federated India of the times to come, and we will be at a great disadvantage in every way if we do not know Hindi. It will affect our bread, our taxation and budgets, and many things will be done over our heads if we are not able to understand Hindustani.[2]

Although this was their main reason for supporting Hindi, Rajaji and his cabinet colleagues failed to emphasize this point while outlining the educational policy of the ministry for fear of stirring up popular resentment against the Congress in the country. Instead they endeavoured to reason with the people, as Gandhi had previously done during his visits to Madras,[3] so that they might understand why, of all the Indian languages,

---

1 *Mail*, 5 October 1937.

2 *Mail*, 27 August 1937.

3 Gandhi made an extensive lecture tour of the Tamil districts in 1919, visiting Tanjore, Trichinopoly, Madura and Tuticorin. All his lectures elaborating the concepts of the Satyagraha movement were begun with an appeal to the people of Tamilnad to learn Hindi, 'the national language of India.' For example his speech at Tuticorin began thus: 'When you have learnt the *lingua franca*, the national language of India, that is Hindi, I shall have much pleasure in addressing you in Hindi. And it is open to all of you to avail yourselves of the opportunity now offered in Madras and other places of learning Hindi. Until you do so, you really shut yourself out from the rest of India'. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XV, p. 159.

Hindi was chosen to be put in the place of English and why a knowledge of Hindi was essential for Southerners. To emphasize Hindi's claim to be the common language, Rajaji said it was spoken by a large number of people in the 'widest possible area of India.'[1] Explaining the advantages of possessing a knowledge of Hindi, he further said that it would enable the people of Madras 'to understand their Northern brother better than at present.'[2] The Education Minister, Subbarayan, assured the people that the study of Hindi would not weaken the position of regional languages and instead it would enrich the regional literatures.[3] But Bulusu Sambamurthi put it rather bluntly when he said that Hindi, being the 'national language' should be taught as a compulsory subject for the purpose of maintaining the unity of the nation.[4]

At least in the Congress circles, opposition to Hindi was not pronounced before 1937, because they had accepted Gandhi's views on the role the Indian languages played in the affairs of the country. He did not favour the retention of English as the *lingua franca* of the country, for it led to the neglect of the study of regional languages. Partly for political reasons and partly to encourage the revival of regional languages he had since 1909 advocated the replacement of English at the regional and national levels by local languages and Hindi respectively. Gandhi's views concerning the progressive use of Indian languages in the social and political life of the country were made synonymous with his concept of *swaraj*, which meant political and cultural independence.[5] His constant propaganda in the South favouring the use of regional languages in the affairs of the country helped to vernacularize provincial politics.

At the same time Gandhi took measures to popularize Hindi in the South. On the request of 18 lawyers and graduates of Kumbakonam for a Hindi teacher, he sent his son Devadas Gandhi to Madras in 1918.[6] Gandhi also appealed to various

1 *Mail* and *Hindu*, 27 August 1937.
2 *Mail*, 12 July 1937.
3 *Mail*, 14 August 1937.
4 *Mail*, 25 August 1937.
5 Ramanathan, *Gandhi and the Youth*, p. 16.
6 *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XIV, pp. 359-60.

literary organizations in the North to spread Hindi in the South. On his appeal, the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan of Allahabad established one of its branches in Madras City in 1919, which strove to popularize Hindi.[1] Despite its work, the progress of Hindi education was not up to the expectations of Gandhi. Therefore during his sojourn in Madras in June 1920, he appealed to the people to take to Hindi seriously 'for the sake of full national expansion.' Furthermore he said:

> Let no Dravidian think that learning Hindi is at all difficult. A little time taken from the recreation hour daily and in a systematic manner will enable an average man to learn Hindi in one year. I would venture to suggest, too, that large municipalities might now introduce Hindi as an optional language to be learnt in the municipal schools.. I venture to hope therefore that the young men of Madras will show their appreciation of Marwadi generosity by availing themselves of the facility afforded to them of learning Hindi without payment.[2]

In 1925, at the Cawnpore Session, the Indian National Congress amended Article 33 of its Constitution in order to encourage the Congress committees at the national and provincial levels to use Hindi or the relevant regional languages in preference to English in their proceedings. The amended constitution was as follows:

> The proceedings of the Congress shall be conducted as far as possible in Hindustani. The English language or any provincial language may be used if the speaker is unable to speak Hindustani or whenever necessary. The proceedings of the Provincial Congress committee shall ordinarily be conducted in the language of the Province concerned. Hindustani may also be used.[3]

This encouraged the intelligentsia to take up the study of Hindi. Local Congress committees also conducted Hindi classes for the benefit of Congress members and the general public.

---

1 Ibid., Vol. XVII, p. 490.

2 Ibid., Vol. XVII, p. 491.

3 Mohan Kumaramangalam, *India's Language Crisis*, pp. 11-12.

Even then the enthusiasm for learning Hindi was confined largely to Brahmans because they evaluated the importance of Hindi in national politics as well as the employment opportunities it would provide after the formation of a national government. Their eagerness to learn Hindi was part of their preparedness to equip themselves for their future role in national politics. Besides, learning Hindi was relatively easier for them, because of their knowledge of Sanskrit. Devanagari is the script of both Sanskrit and Hindi and Sanskrit words continue to enrich the Hindi vocabulary.

On the other hand non-Brahmans in the Congress were relatively untouched by the Hindi movement. Even those who were in a position to understand the political implications of the language policy of the Congress, could not do much to spread Hindi among non-Brahman masses, because a large section of them was illiterate. As a result non-Brahman leaders' prime concern in the 1920's and 1930's was to educate the masses in their mother tongue and to give them political education, which in turn made them vernacularize politics. This left them, therefore, with no choice but to ignore Hindi, although they were not against it. For the educated non-Brahmans, who were outside the Congress, Hindi offered no material benefits. For the chauvinist it had no cultural or literary value, compared to any of the Dravidian languages. Hindi was an anathema to the political opponents of the Congress. The Self-Respecters, for example, at the Virudhunagar conference in August 1931, condemned the introduction of Hindi in national politics as a retrograde step which would benefit only the sanathanists.[1] Thus, in spite of Gandhi's support and the eagerness and the interest generated by Brahmans, Hindi could not make much headway among the large majority of the people living in the Province of Madras until 1937.

The mere proposal to introduce Hindi came in for criticism from all sections of the people: the politicians, the academics and the Tamil scholars. The Justicites, the Self-Respecters and the leaders of the Muslim League opposed the attempts to replace English by Hindi because to them it was a regional language spoken essentially in some provinces in the North and it

[1] *Our Aim*, p. 12.

was as much 'a foreign language' as English to South Indians.[1] Reddi Naidu an uncompromising critic of Rajaji, questioned the very hypothesis that a common language was desirable for India, because the solidarity of the country depended, according to him, on factors other than language. At the Anti-Hindi Conference held at Kāñchipuram in February 1938 he questioned whether a common language was essential and indispensable in a federal country like India for the assimilation of its people, for developing their sense of patriotism or for the solidarity of the nation. And he himself answered the question in the following manner.

> Take, for instance, the case of Canada, which has a Federal form of Government and where two different languages, namely French and English have always been spoken. Take again, the case of South Africa where we find two different races, the English and the Dutch speaking two different languages, English and Afrikkaans, both officially recognized. Look at Switzerland, where we find three different races, speaking three different languages (yet) forming a single nation. By the Federal constitution of Switzerland of 1874 German, French and Italian are recognized as national languages, in spite of the fact that 71 per cent of the population speak German, 23 per cent speak French and only 5 or 6 per cent speak Italian.[2]

The educationists steered clear of all controversies regarding the value of Hindi and its claim to become the national language and confined themselves to the 'compulsory introduction' of an additional language in the school curriculum. From this point of view the compulsory teaching of Hindi involved an undesirable increase in the time spent on acquiring language skills as opposed to general learning. Moreover, though the advocates of Hindi promised that the burden of other subjects would be lessened, thus relieving some of the strain on the students, the educationists felt that the methods used in teaching Hindi would be unscientific and out of date, and that there would be no adequate agency to ensure the maintenance of standards and the

---

[1] *Mail*, 17 and 24 August 1937; 23 and 28 February 1938.

[2] *Mail*, 28 February 1938.

proper assessment of results. They believed that the proposal would lead to the dissipation of limited financial resources in favour of the remote need of the few, while the essential need of the many for satisfactory elementary education remained unsatisfied.[1]

There were two main reasons for the Tamil scholars' opposition to Hindi. In the first place, the introduction of Hindi meant to them the revival of Sanskrit, a language which they traditionally opposed. Secondly, the mother tongue was not a compulsory subject in the curriculum in those days and many passed out of the schools without a knowledge of their Dravidian tongue.[2] Therefore they argued that the introduction of Hindi, an Aryan language in the schools, without making the mother tongue also a compulsory subject, was a deliberate attempt to relegate the Dravidian languages to the background.

While the opposition to Hindi was gaining momentum in the province from different sections of the people, the Tamil scholars organized themselves, purely from cultural considerations, into an association called the Society for the Protection of Tamil Language in 1937. Its headquarters was at Tinnevelly, a centre of Tamil revivalism in the early years of this century. N. V. Nelliappa Pillai, a retired Tahsildar, was the president and T. S. Kandaswamy Mudaliar and V. Tiruvarangam Pillai, two local dignitaries, were the secretaries of the Society. As the aim of the Society was to mobilize the opinion of all sections of Tamils, irrespective, of political considerations, its work was naturally confined only to the Tamil districts. In order to educate

1 *Mail*, 22 November 1938.

2 Before independence English was the medium of instruction in schools. It was given the first place among the languages in the curriculum followed by the mother tongue, Sanskrit, Tamil, Urdu or any one of the European languages. Students were given the choice of studying either their mother tongue or any of the languages offered in the school as a second language. Therefore the study of the mother tongue was not compulsory. Brahman and Muslim students mostly studied Sanskrit and Urdu respectively. Non-Brahman boys who belonged to the upper middle class invariably studied one other European language instead of their mother tongue. The same procedure was also followed in the colleges. On account of this many completed their education without having even a rudimentary knowledge of the mother tongue.

the public, pamphlets were published which discussed what the introduction of compulsory Hindi in the school curricula would mean to Tamils. One largely circulated pamphlet, addressed to Rajaji, compared the merits of Hindi and Tamil and ended up warning him not to impose Hindi, in the teeth of opposition, for it was viewed as a threat to the Tamil language; otherwise there would be a revolt in the country.[1] Public meetings were convened at regular intervals, which were often addressed by three protagonists of Tamil, S. Somasundara Bharati, Eelathu Sivananda Adigal and Kāñchi Paravasathu Rajagopalachariar.[2] At the end of each meeting resolutions much the same in all details requesting the government to drop Hindi were passed. On 5 September 1937, at a largely attended public meeting in Tinnevelly the speakers condemned the compulsory introduction of Hindi, criticised the government's apathy in making Tamil a compulsory language in schools and colleges in the Tamil districts, and appealed to the governor to exercise his power of veto in order to disallow the bill making Hindi a compulsory subject in all the provincial schools to be introduced in the Madras Legislature. These views were subsequently put in the form of resolutions and were sent to the Governor of Madras, the Prime Minister and the Minister for Education.[3] Letters were also addressed by the members of this society in their individual capacity as Congressmen, to Gandhi, Nehru and other North

---

1 The Society for the Protection of Tamil: *Velippataikkatitam* (an open letter to Rajaji), (Tinnevelly, 1937) pp. 2-6.

2 These three were the fathers of the Anti-Hindi Movement in Tamilnad. S. Somasundara Bharati, M.A., B.L., was professor of Tamil at the Annamalai University, Chidambaram, and author of many books in Tamil. Though a Congressmen, Bharati was the first to oppose the introduction of compulsory Hindi in Tamilnad. Nothing much is known about Eelathu Sivananda Adigal except that he was the president of the 'Enlightenment Society' and a wellread man in Tamil. Again, very little is known about Kanchi Paravasathu Rajagopalachariar except that he was a Vaishnava Brahman and that he was the only Brahman member of the Justice Party. He was one of the very important leaders behind the anti-Hindi movement and worked hand in hand with Bharati and to a lesser extent with Naicker. He was the arch critic of Rajaji.

3 *Resolutions passed unanimously at a special meeting held on* 12 *September* 1937 (Tinnevelly, 1937), p. 3.

Indian leaders, requesting them to intervene and dissuade Rajaji from introducing Hindi in schools.[1]

The impact of the propaganda carried on by the Tamil Protection Society and the individual campaigns of Bharati, Eelathu Adigal and Kāñchi Rajagopalachariar, served not only to mobilize public opinion but helped also to unite the Tamils to a common cause. They gathered at the Provincial Tamil Conference held at Trichinopoly on 26 December 1937. The conference was presided over by Somasundara Bharati and attended by 65 'distinguished' invitees, 646 delegates, 536 visitors, 105 reception committee members, and over 800 ordinary members. Prominent among those who attended the conference were Muthiah Mudaliar, a former Minister, Pannirselvam, a Justicite, Ramasami Naicker, and Karumuthu Theagaraya Chettiar, a leading industrialist of Madura. The general trend of the proceedings of the conference, including the presidential address delivered by Bharati, indicated the gathering storm against Hindi.[2] At the conclusion of usual deliberations, the conference passed one significant resolution which indicated that the Tamils had come to grips with the Hindi question and that they were bent upon tackling it on constitutional lines. According to that resolution the conference resolved to appoint a committee consisting of Somasundara Bharati, Ramasami Naicker and T. V.

1 *A letter to the Hon. The Chief Minister, Government of Madras from M. V. Nellaiappa Pillai, president of the Society for the Protection of Tamil Language* (Tinnevelly, 1937), pp. 1-2; *A letter to Mahatma Gandhi from R. G. Nallakuttalam Pillai* (Srivilliputtur, 1937), pp. 1-2; *Letter to Mahatma Gandhi from Eelathu Sivananda Adikal* (Karur, 1937), p. 1.

2 *Proceedings of the Provincia Third Tamilian Conference* (Trichinopoly, 1937), pp. 1-2.

Umamaheswaram Pillai, president of the Karanthai Tamil Sangam, to wait in deputation on the governor[1] and explain to him,

> the great consternation and discontent that had roused the anger of the Tamils consequent on the dictatorial and undemocratic methods pursued by the present Ministry in the matter of making Hindi a compulsory subject of study in public schools, as it is calculated to prevent the educational advancement of the people and cause great harm to the Tamil language and culture.[2]

Other resolution hinted at the emergence of 'Tamil nationalism', if one considered the resolutions that called on the government to form a Tamil State constituting therein all the Tamil speaking areas in the composite Province of Madras, and to establish a separate Tamil university to promote the study of Tamil language and art 'in view of the meagre support given by the existing universities to the study of Tamil'. Moreover, in order to stem the tide of Hindi and to establish a separate Tamil province, the Tamilian Association was inaugurated at the conference itself, under the presidency of Bharati. Thereafter the Tamil Protection Society seemed to have merged with this.[3] A committee

---

1 No information is available as to whether or not the members of the committee met the governor and apprised him of their views against Hindi. But two months before this conference a similar attempt was made to see the governor. C. K. Subramania Mudaliar, president District Tamilar Sangam and vice-president Kovai Tamil Sangam, wrote a letter to the governor on 4 October 1937 requesting him to give an audience to the members of the sangams, so that they could explain their views on the compulsory introduction of Hindi. But the secretary to the governor sent a reply saying that 'His Excellency regrets that no useful purpose will be served by his receiving a deputation in the matter of compulsory introduction of Hindi in schools as it is a subject in the administration of which His Excellency is statutorily to be guided by the advice of his Ministers. I am to add that His Excellency has the assurance of the Ministry that the introduction of Hindi in the schools would in no way jeopardise the interests of the mother tongue and that the mother tongue will be protected'. *Letter from the Secretary to Governor to C. K. Subramania Mudaliar*, Letter No. 1-343/37, dt (?) October 1937.

2 *Mail*, 28 December 1937.

3 After the inauguration of the Tamilian Association, the Tamil Protection Society merged with it. Some of the active members of the Tamil Protection Society played an important role in the Tamilian Association.

for the Tamilian Association consisting of 38 members drawn from all the Tamil districts was constituted.[1] The choice of the committee members was discriminative in that it consisted mostly of Justicites and Self-Respecters. To give a non-political image some professional men and local dignitaries, and a few Tamil scholars were included. Except for Somasundara Bharati, Umamaheswaram Pillai, Eelathu Sivananda Adigal, Karumuthu Theagaraya Chettiar, Pandithamani M. Kadhiresan Chettiar and K. Subramania Pillai, all the other members were career politicians. Kadhiresan Chettiar and Subramania Pillai were Tamil scholars.[2] The mere composition of the committee indicates that the anti-Hindi movement, started and strengthened by the Tamil academics, had passed into the hands of politicians, although Somasundara Bharati continued to lead the movement.

But the government took no notice of the mounting opposition and did not make the teaching of Hindi optional. On 21 April 1938 the Madras Government passed an order introducing the study of Hindi compulsorily in certain secondary schools in the presidency.[3] Nine days later on 30 April, the Ministry of Public Information issued a press communique in which it said that in the coming school year Hindi would be introduced as a compulsory subject of study in the first three forms or the 125 secondary schools.[4] To implement this scheme successfully the government allocated an additional sum of 20,000 rupees specifically for the salary of Hindi teachers in that year's budget.[5]

The initial reaction to the government orders came first of all in the form of an individual satyagraha. One Jagadesan (who had adopted 'Stalin' as his first name), probably a Self-Respecter, residing at Theagarayanagar in Madras, in emulation of the precedents set up by the Congress commenced a fast to death from 1 May, not only to protect against compulsory Hindi but to force the government to withdraw its orders.[6] Since the

1 *Proceeding of the Provincial Third Tamilian Conference*, p. 2; *Mail*, 28 December 1937.

2 *Mail*, 28 December 1937.

3 M.R.C. *Miscellaneous, Public Education, G.O. No.* 911, 21 April 1938.

4 *Mail* and *Hindu*, 30 April 1938.

5 Ibid., 30 April 1938.

6 *Mail*, 2 May 1938; *Kudi Arasu*, 8 May 1938.

leaders of the anti Hindi movement and the Justicites were opposed to the use of fasts as political weapons, they discouraged others from resorting to fasting in their campaigns against Hindi.[1] After ten weeks Jagadesan himself was persuaded to break his fast. Several other proposals were made in public meetings held throughout May. At the Madura District Anti-Hindi Conference, held at Sholavandan on 9 May, it was decided to appeal to parents to boycott the schools where Hindi was introduced. At the same time a committee was formed, consisting of some of the leading Justicites including Soundrapandiya Nadar, with the avowed object of picketing such schools.[2] Subsequently in another public meeting held on 15 May, Shanmugananda Swamigal, a Congressman, called on the people to stage a satyagraha before the Premier's residence from 1 June onwards.[3] Whie arrangements for the satyagraha were in progress Ramasami Naicker sided with the anti-Hindi campaigns and wrote a series of inflammatory editorials in *Kudi Arasu*, beginning from 8 May, urging 'every pure-blooded Tamilian to rise against the Āryan menace'.[4] This gave a fillip to the whole anti-Hindi movement.

The Congressmen on the other hand organized several public meetings to defend and to explain the educational policy of the government. Nothing was new in their arguments for the introduction of compulsory Hindi. In the legislative assembly no proper reply came from the ministers as to why, before making the study of the mother tongue compulsory, Hindi should be taught in schools, and why English should not continue to be the language of inter-state communication.[5] The *Kudi-Arasu*, in its 29 May issue, posed a question to the Congressmen 'if English was foreign why conduct a parliamentary system of government in the Fort St George.[6] If for the North Indians English was not *swadeshi*

1 *Kudi Arasu*, 8 May 1938.

2 *Kudi Arasu*, 15 May 1938; *Mail*, 10 May 1938.

3 *Mail*, 16 May 1938; *Kudi Arasu*, 22 May 1938.

4 *Kudi Arasu*, 29 May 1938.

5 *Kudi Arasu*, 15 May 1938; *MLAD*, Vol. V, March 1938, p. 272; and Vol. VI, (March 1938), pp. 481-82; *Kudi Arasu*, 15 May 1938.

6 *Kudi Arasu*, 29 May 1938. The Madras State Legislative Assembly and the Council conducted its proceedings at Fort St. George, the seat of the Government of Madras.

Hindi was *videshi* for the Tamils.'[1] Despite the Congressmen's inability to defend their ministry policy, some of them who were not members of the legislative assembly met at the invitation of Varadarajulu Naidu to consider the objections to Hindi.[2] None of them who attended the meeting had any hand in framing the Hindi scheme. Nor were there any prospect of their views finding favour with the Congress hierarchy in Madras. However this did not preclude them from considering some proposals which would dissuade the anti-Hindi campaigners from launching a satyagraha or picketing. But none of the proposals grappled with the crux of the problem. The agitators were opposed, as indicated by their press statements and speeches, not to the teaching of Hindi but to the 'compulsory study of Hindi'. This the participants, including Varadarajulu Naidu, altogether overlooked. Instead they suggested to the government a compromise formula by which students should be exempted if their parents objected to Hindi and that failure in Hindi should not affect promotions to higher classes.[3] For a week the government paid no heed to these proposals. Later, on account of the pressure from party members, the Minister for Education acceded to one of their requests. He declared at the Teachers' Conference at Erode that no examinations would be conducted in Hindi, although it was to be taught compulsorily in the first three forms in schools.[4] Subsequently a government order was issued to the effect that attendance in Hindi classes would be compulsory and that a failure in Hindi would not affect promotions to higher class. The government order explained:

> The attainment by our Province of its rightful place in the national life of India requires that our educated youths should possess a working knowledge of the most widely spoken language in India. Government have therefore decided upon the introduction of Hindustani in the secondary school curriculum of our Province. Government desire to make it clear that Hindustani is not to be introduced in any elementary school whatsoever, the mother tongue being the only language taught in such

1 *Videshi*: foreign

2 *Kudi Arasu*, 22 May 1938; *Swadesamitran*, 20 May 1938.

3 *Mail*, 1 June 1938.

4 *Ibid.*, 1 June 1938.

> schools. Hindustani is to be introduced only in secondary schools and there too, only in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd forms, that is to say, in the 6th, 7th and 8th years of school life. It will not interfere in any way with the teaching of the mother tongue in the secondary schools. The study of the mother tongue will continue to be enforced as before, and promotions from class to class will not be affected by failure of proficiency in Hindustani, but will depend, as before, on the general proficiency and marks obtained in other subjects including the mother tongue. Hindustani will be compulsory only in the sense that attendance in such classes will be compulsory and pupils cannot take Hindustani as a substitute for Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam or Kannada, but must learn Hindustani only in addition to one of these languages.[1]

The statement of the Education Minister and the assurances of Congress leaders indicated that they were in no mood for a compromise with the agitators. Compelled by this stiff attitude, Somasundara Bharati convened the executive committee of the Tamilian Association on 28 May to consider some of the suggestions put forth by his colleagues in order to counter the government move before the schools were reopened in June for the academic year. The committee met in full strength for two days at Tennur in Trichinopoly. It considered the Hindi question in all its implications and decided to launch a campaign. At the conclusion of the meeting the committee formally inaugurated the Madras Provincial Anti-Hindi League with 112 members, 60 of whom would represent places at which Hindi was proposed to be introduced in schools. Its function was to direct the anti-Hindi campaign, while the association would remain a policy making body. Direction was given to the members of the association to form sub-committees in different parts of the Tamil districts with the help of local organizations which had been carrying on propaganda against Hindi. Full authority was also given to C. D. Nayagam to launch organized picketing before the Prime Minister's house at Theagarayanagar in Madras on 1 June 1938.[2]

---

1 NMML., *Madras Legislative Reports, File No. PL*-3, 1938, pp. 51-52.

2 *Mail*, 30 May 1938, *Kudi Arasu*, 5 June 1938.

As expected, Nayagam, a retired deputy registrar of co-operative societies, arrived in Madras on 30 May to take charge of the arrangements for picketing before the Premier's house at Bazullah Road, Theagarayanagar. A mile away from his residence at Venkatanarayana Road, the volunteers and picketers camped under the shade of a hastily erected *pandal* on a vacant plot of land. It virtually became the headquarters of the Anti-Hindi League, otherwise known as the Compulsory Hindi Boycott Committee. On 1 June more than 300 volunteers led by Nayagam left Venkatanarayana Road in procession along the main roads of Theagarayanagar, with placards bearing catchy slogans such as 'Down with Compulsory Hindi', and 'Long Live Tamil,'[1] and reached the Bazullah Road. In front of the Premier's residence they held a meeting which was addressed by four saffron-clad *sanyasis*, Arunagiri Adigal, Shanmugananda Adigal, Eelathu Adigal and Vimalananda Adigal.[2]

Towards the end of the meeting one Ponnuswami of Palladam, in the Coimbatore district, announced that he would commence a fast, and he pledged not to break it until the government withdrew compulsory Hindi. Clad in a *Khaddar jibba* and *dhoti*,[3] he squatted in front of the Premier's house under the shade of a tree, with a flag bearing a lotus, a fish and a tiger, the official emblem of the Boycott Committee, and began his fast unto death.[4]

The picketers then stood in front of the Premier's house in rows and shouted slogans demanding the withdrawal of compulsory Hindi. The techniques followed by them were reminiscent of the days of Congress satyagraha a decade and a half earlier. The procession was orderly and for a few days picketers shouted slogans relevant to the issues without provoking any adverse comment from the 'hostile Brahman press.'[5]

Though the 'orderly picketing' before the Premier's house received only a little publicity from the neutral press,

1 *Kudi Arasu*, 5 June 1938; *Mail*, 1 June 1938.

2 M. Ilanceliyan, *Tamilan Totutta Mutal Por* (The First Struggle of the Tamils) (Madras, 1941?), p. 78.

3 *Jibba*: a loose full sleeved shirt; *dhoti*: a four yard cloth worn around the waist reaching the feet. It is the national dress of the Tamils.

4 M. Ilanceliyan, *Tamilan Totutta Mutal Por*. p. 78; *Mail*, 1 June 1938.

5 *Kudi Arasu*, 5 June 1938.

Ponnuswami's fast attracted the attention of a large number of politicians, for he claimed to be a Congressman. Many Self-Respecters and Justicites, including Rao Saheb N. Sivaraj, visited him. The Minister for Public Information, Ramanathan, was one of the visitors, although his purpose was different.[1]

Rajaji was not in the city to witness these events because he had left for Bangalore the day before the picketing. Obviously there were no clear instructions to the police and they therefore kept a 24 hour vigil at his house without interfering with the activities of the picketers. For two days the police made no arrests.

On 3 June a procession of over 1,000 people started from Kodambakkam shouting slogans such as 'Down with Hindi' and 'Down with the Premier' with the intention of staging a demonstration in front of the Premier's residence. The procession was headed by Nayagam and Shanmugananda Adigal. The police arrested them along with Palladam Ponnuswami in the vicinity of the Premier's residence and they were brought before the Chief Presidency Magistrate, to be remanded.[2]

They were charged with offences under Section 7(1) of the Criminal Law Amendment Act. It was a comprehensive Act promulgated in the teeth of opposition in 1932 to suppress the civil disobedience movement. All the Congressmen including Rajaji condemned it as the 'lawless law'.[3] The same law was, however, invoked by the Congress leaders to put down the anti-Hindi agitation According to the provisions of this Act,[4] all three agitators could be charged for inciting people by their speeches and action to 'loiter' in front of the Premier's residence with the intention of compelling him to cancel compulsory Hindi. The police did charge Nayagam and Shanmugananda Adigal under the Criminal Law for 'actively abetting Anti-Compulsory Hindi propaganda' and Ponnuswami for 'actively participating in the campaign'. The first two, however, were released on bail on their own bonds for a sum of 1,000 rupees with two securities for 250 rupees each, on giving an undertaking

1 M. Ilanceliyan, *Tamilan Totutta Mutal Por*, p. 78.

2 *Mail*, 4 June 1938; *Hindu*, 4 June 1938.

3 *Sunday Observer*, 11 September 1938.

4 See Appendix 7 for the Section 7 (1) of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1932.

that they would refrain from carrying on Anti-Hindi propaganda, pending the investigation and disposal of the case. But Ponnuswami refused to give such an undertaking and preferred to face any legal consequences. Therefore, he was sent back into custody till 17 June.[1]

Nayagam's commitments precluded him from continuing to direct the anti-Hindi campaign, and his place was taken by Eelathu Sivananda Adigal.[2] Under his leadership the picketing before Rajaji's residence continued unabated till 10 June, despite the efforts of the police and arrest of the picketers. On the 11 June the police raided the headquarters of the Boycott Committee in Venkatanarayana Road, seized all registers, placards and other papers and arrested Eelathu Adigal on a charge of abetting offences under the Criminal Law.[3] But the agitators, instead of setting up a new venue, assembled every day in a new place which had been decided on the previous evening, and from there they marched in procession to Bezullah Road to stage the demonstration.

Rajaji and his Cabinet colleagues viewed the agitation as merely a problem of law and order, without caring to re-evaluate their stance on Hindi. But as a concession they were prepared to go as far as remedying the disadvantages that might be experienced by students in learning an additional language at the secondary school level. They assured both parents and students that the Hindi syllabus would be light and, despite compulsion, it was to be taught only for 2¼ hours a week.[4] They also reaffirmed that failure in Hindi would in no way affect promotion to higher classes. The public was reassured that the importance of the mother tongue would not be neglected in spite of making Hindi compulsory. Even this compulsion, according to a government press release, was merely to ensure attendance in Hindi Classes. It also pledged that the mother tongue would be made the medium of instruction in the secondary schools.[5] The press communique stated:

1 *Kudi Arasu*, 12 June 1938; *Mail*, 4 June 1938.

2 M. Ilanceliyan, *Tamilan Totutta Mutal Por*, p. 80.

3 *Mail*, 11 June 1938; *Kudi Arasu*, 19 June 1938.

4 *Mail* and *Hindu*, 17 June 1938.

5 *Mail* and *Hindu*, 10 June 1938; *Kudi Arasu*, 12 June 1938.

> .. the Government have already ordered that the mother tongue should be the medium of instruction in the secondary schools commencing with the 4th forms this year,—leading upto the highest high school class in the course of the next two years,—in areas where the difficulties of bilingualism do not complicate the problem. The importance of the mother tongue will be maintained through the curriculum. The Government are revising the S. S. L. C. regulations so as to make facility to correct expression in the mother tongue compulsory for all students going through the S. S. L. C. examination. The Government have thus kept in view the importance of the mother tongue in the scheme of education in this Province and in fact are taking steps to raise the mother tongue to a position of greater importance than it has hitherto enjoyed.[1]

The Ministry, however, was not prepared to drop the element of compulsion as demanded by the leaders of the anti-Hindi movement. Rajaji himself made it very explicit that Hindi would be taught as a compulsory subject in an extraordinary statement made at a meeting held at Triplicane beach on 16 June 1938. He proclaimed,

> So long as I am in charge of the administration of the Province I cannot avoid doing a thing in which I have complete belief and faith. I will not be true to myself and to my principles if I do not put into practice those principles.[2]

This statement showed his faith in his personal judgement, but it equally exposed his 'dictatorial attitude', much to the dismay of his political opponents. In the course of the same speech he added that the surest way to spread Hindi in South India was to make it a 'compulsory subject of study'. This speech, did much to discourage the voluntary learning of Hindi in South India,[3] and its longterm effects may be noticed even today.

---

1 NMML., *Madras Legislative Reports, File No. PL-3*, 1938, pp. 51-52.

2 *Mail* and *Hindu*, 17 June 1938.

3 Ibid., 17 June 1938.

Rajaji's rather 'unpolitic statements' made on the sands of Triplicane beach gave the signal for the anti-Hindi agitators to intensify their campaign. Picketing became more persistent and slogan-shouting immoderately noisy. Slogans such as 'Down with Poonūl Rājyam' and 'Down with Uccikkuḍumi Rājyam' were shouted much to the indignation of Brahmans. The terms *Poonul*, the holy thread worn across the body, and *Uccikkudumi*, a tuft of hair on the head were the characteristic symbols of the Brahman's way of life, and therefore they were drawn as verbal caricatures to depict the Premier and more especially the community he represented. These symbols were held up as objects of ridicule and the Congress rule itself was derided as Brahman *Raj*.[1] This apart, meetings addressed by Congressmen and even by Ministers were often rudely disturbed.[2] The number of anti-Hindi meetings rousing the masses against the government also increased.

The government, fully armed with the provisions of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, was prepared to go to extremes to quell the agitation. Picketers were arrested and sentenced to varying periods of rigorous imprisonment. Ponnuswami and Shanmugananda Adigal, who had been arrested in the first few weeks of the campaign, were given six and four months rigorous imprisonment respectively and Eelathu Adigal was sentenced to nine months. Nayagam was let off with one month simple imprisonment and 200 rupees fine in view of his past services to the government.[3]

The government's firm stand on the implementation of Hindi in schools and the stern action taken against the civil resisters were criticized by all the leading newspapers in the country. Apart from pointing out the lack of vision in invoking legal authority to bear down opposition, they all unanimously agreed that the

1 *Sunday Observer*, 25 September 1938.

2 At Krishnagiri on 7 June the Premier suspended the proceedings of a public meeting for some time, because of the noisy black flag demonstrations. *Mail*, 8 June 1938. On 17 June at a public meeting at the Triplicane beach more than 100 anti-Hindi picketers rushed to the dais waving black flags and shouting anti-Hindi slogans on the commencement of the meeting while others, who had occupied the front rows, poured a rain of sand at the speakers on the dais. The police brought the situation under control, though many sustained minor injuries. *Mail*, 17 June 1938.

3 M. Ilanceliyan, *Tamilan Totutta Mutal Por.*, p. 77.

people's fears that their culture, language and traditions would be imperilled by the compulsory study of Hindi were genuine, and that the government should therefore remove that apprehension before compelling people to learn Hindi. The *Guardian* and the *Indian Christian Weekly* of Madras warned the government that the language policy gave rise to only hate and bitterness between the Brahmans and the non-Brahmans.[1] The *Bombay Chronicie*, a Congress journal, advised the Madras Government that, instead of resorting to repressive measures, it should consider the views of the opposition on their own merits lest the whole anti-Hindi movement should mislead the people and endanger the national unity sought to be promoted by the introduction of compulsory Hindi in the curriculum.[2] An Andhra journal, the *Social Reformer*, in a trenchant article warned the people to be on their guard against the empire building designs of the North Indians and said,

> .. it is better that Andhras too say plainly that except the political freedom movement of Mr Gandhi, we do not want any of this silent empire building schemes to sidetrack us in our helpless movements. We may not love English but we love Hindi (the) least which cannot stand equal in status with our highly developed and ancient mother tongue .. Those that want it may learn it, but let them no more tack it to the *swaraj* issue .. If people do not say so publicly .. it is because they are all mesmerized on the wholesome issue of *swaraj* and there has been no sufficient awakening in them through proper propaganda of the implications of Gandhian side issues. .[3]

Despite the caution of the newspapers, the government policy was not modified a whit. So also the civil resister's technique of picketing was not changed; instead the number of centres for picketing increased, to the discomfort of the government. Demonstrations were held before the schools where Hindi was compulsorily taught on their reopening in July as well as before the Premier's residence. In the case of big cities like Madras one school became the special target of anti-Hindi demonstrations. The Hindu

1 Quoted in the *Sunday Observer*, 3 July 1938.

2 Ibid., 3 July 1938.

3 Ibid., 10 July 1938.

Theological High School at Mint Street in Madras was purposely chosen as the venue for demonstration because it was patronized by the North Indian community living in that part of the city.

Demonstrations before the Hindu Theological High School became a regular feature from July 1938. Every day a procession was taken out from some part of George Town, passing through several streets before reaching the school. There they stood in files of two in front of the entrance and raised slogans against the imposition of Hindi. On one occasion the slogans were shouted loudly enough to disturb the normal functioning of the school, and the police who were keeping guard approached the demonstrators and asked them to disperse. But the picketers refused to obey the orders and were arrested. Subsequently they were tried and sentenced to terms of rigorous imprisonment ranging from four months to three years. Demonstrations of this nature were held in several parts of the Tamil districts for some time, but in Madras they continued almost without break before the same school until the compulsion was withdrawn in 1940.[1]

Picketing educational institutions had a tremendous propaganda value for the anti-Hindi movement. With the staging of demonstrations, the number of convictions under the Criminal Law Amendment Act also increased. The nationalist press, which had generally published very scanty information concerning the anti-Hindi demonstrations, was forced to report the many court cases of the civil resisters in detail.[2] The impact of the anti-Hindi demonstrations on the student population was equally remarkable, for in some schools the students themselves boycotted the Hindi classes. They staged demonstrations at Salem, Trichinopoly and Tinnevelly, causing new problems for the educational authorities.[3]

While there was perceptible impact of the anti-Hindi movement even on the 'hostile press' and on the student population in general, the leaders of the Self-Respect movement and the members of the Muslim League planned to organize a march from Trichinopoly to Madras in order to strengthen public opinion in favour of the anti-Hindi movement and to create greater awareness among the masses.

1 M. Ilanceliyan, *Tamilan Totutta Mutal Por*, p. 82.

2 Interview with Balasubramaniam on 28 July 1969.

3 Interview with Sivagnanam, on 10 September 1969.

Ramasami Naicker, Vedachalam, Alagiriswamy, R. Tirumalaiswami,[1] Mrs Ramamirtham Ammal, and Khallifullah, the leader of the Muslim League, met at Trichinopoly a week before the scheduled date to choose suitable volunteers. One hundred and one able bodied men were selected for the march and 1. Kumaraswami Pillai, a leading lawyer of Tanjore, was deputed to lead the Tamil Brigade. A detailed programme was prepared giving information regarding the dates and times of arrival and departure at different places. On 1 August 1938, after attending a farewell meeting at the Town Hall Square in Trichinopoly, the Tamil Brigade started its march to Madras.[2]

As the purpose of the marchers was to mobilize public opinion against Hindi, they took a long route, which passed through Trichinopoly, Tanjore, South Arcot and Chingleput districts.[3] They covered 234 villages and 60 mofussil towns in the course of their march. Eighty-seven public meetings were addressed, which, it was claimed, were attended by over 450,000 people in all.[4] One zealous admirer of this movement pointed out that the Anti-Hindi Tamil Brigade's 42 day 'strenuous march' excelled Gandhi's march to Dandi and Rajaji's march to Vedaranyam if not in fame and significance at least in all other respects.[5]

The members of the Tamil Brigade were warmly received throughout their march by all sections of non-Brahmans who were opposed to the Congress. The Justicites, the Tamil scholars and the Tamil cultural organizations stood in the forefront in extending all possible help to the marchers. A 'rousing reception', for example, was given to them at Chidambaram on 12 August 1938. The road from Ammapettai, a small village, to Chidambaram town was

1 The credit for organizing the Anti-Hindi Tamil Brigade was due to R. Tirumalaiswami, the editor of *Nagara Toodan*, a Tamil weekly, published from Trichinopoly. M. Ilanceliyan, *Tamilan Totutta Mutal Por*, p. 116.

2 *Mail*, 3 August 1938, M. Ilanceliyan, *Tamilan Totutta Mutal Por*, pp. 115-16.

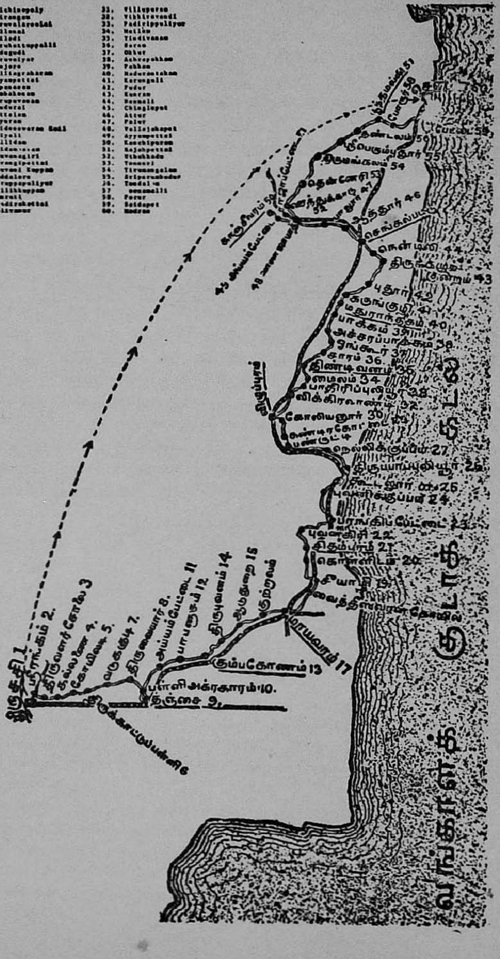
3 See the map on the next page showing the route taken by the Anti-Hindi Brigade from Trichinopoly to Madras.

4 *Sunday Observer*, 18 September 1938; interview with Kanchi Kalyanasundaram on 19 September 1969.

5 M. Ilanceliyan, *Tamilan Totutta Mutal Por* p. 124.

ROUTE MAP OF ANTI-HINDI MARCH

1.	Trichinopoly	31.	Villupuram
2.	Srirangam	32.	Vikkiravandi
3.	Tiruvalarsolai	33.	Padirippuliyur
4.	Kallanai	34.	Mailam
5.	Koiladi	35.	Tindivanam
6.	Tirukattuppalli	36.	Saram
7.	Vadugudi	37.	Okkur
8	Tiruvaiyar	38.	Acharapakkam
9	Tanjore	39.	Pakkam
10.	Palliagraharam	40.	Madurantakam
11.	Ayyampettai	41.	Karunguli
12.	Papanasam	42.	Pudur
13.	Kumbakonam	43.	Kunram
14.	Tirupuvanam	44.	Nenmeli
15.	Aduturai	45.	Chingleput
16.	Kuttalam	46.	Attur
17.	Mayuram	47.	Palur
18.	Vaideeswaran Koil	48.	Vallajahpet
19.	Shiyali	49.	Ayyampettai
20	Kollidam	50.	Kanchipuram
21.	Chidambaram	51.	Rajahpettai
22.	Bhuvanagiri	52.	Uthukkadu
23.	Parangipettai	53.	Tenneri
24.	Bhuvani Kuppam	54.	Tirumangalam
25.	Cuddalore	55.	Sriperumbudur
26.	Tiruppapuliyur	56.	Tandalam
27	Nellikkuppam	57	Poonamalli
28.	Panruti	58.	Porur
29.	Kudirakottai	59.	Saidapet
30	Koliyanur	60.	Madras



watered and decorated with *thoranams* and *kolams*.[1] Local merchants, friends, admirers and sympathizers garlanded the volunteers *en route*. The same evening a public meeting was arranged in Chidambaram at which Alagiriswamy, the deputy leader of the Brigade, made an 'impressive speech', advocating the tactics followed by 'Gandhi's disciples of non-violence' and saying that the Tamil language would be relegated to a secondary place 'in spite of the pretensions of the Ministers to make Tamil the medium of instruction in schools.'[2]

The Trichinopoly Tamil Brigade not only helped to strengthen the opposition to Hindi among the masses, but gave a boost to the anti-Hindi movement itself. If the enthusiastic welcome given to the marchers on their arrival in Madras on 11 September 1938 was an indication of their popularity, their impact on the anti-Hindi leagues in other districts resulted in the formation of a brigade in each one of them. These brigades, or *jathas* as they were called, were organized in the districts in order to tour a particular district and to explain to the people their opposition to Hindi. The first of such brigades was formed at Coimbatore, headed by N. P. Kaliappan, a Self-Respecter, on 12 September. This was followed by the formation of *jathas* in North Arcot, Salem, Trichinopoly, Ramnad and Madura districts.[3] To strengthen this popular awakening Naicker made a whirlwind tour of the Tamil districts, giving aggressive speeches against both Hindi and Rajaji's Ministry. All his speeches were reported verbatim in *Kudi Arasu* and *Viduthalai* which encouraged the reading public to become louder in their opposition to Rajaji.

The growing unpopularity of Rajaji's Ministry caused some anxiety among the independent Brahman members in the assembly. Although they did not agree with all that the agitators said against Hindi, they found that some arguments against the use of the Criminal Law Amendment Act were unassailable. In September 1938, T. T. Krishnamachari, an independent M. L. A., gave notice of his intention to move a bill in the legislative assembly which,

---

1 *Thoranam*: festoon: *Kolam*: decorations on the floor drawn with rice flour.

2 *Sunday Observer*, 21 August 1938.

3 *Sunday Observer*, 18 and 25 September 1938.

if approved, would help to repeal the controversial Act. He also appealed to the Premier to adopt the bill as a government measure and pass it expeditiously so that the provincial Congress Government could implement one of the pledges it had made to the people before the elections: to repeal all oppressive Acts passed by the British bureaucracy at the height of non-co-operation days.[1] But the Premier with his 'mechanical majority' in the House prevented the introduction of the bill in the legislative assembly.[2] In the past private bills to which the government was opposed were allowed to be introduced. In 1935, for example, a bill similar to that of Krishnamachari was permitted by Sir Henry Graik, who was then alleged to have been one of the most repressive of Home Members in the central assembly. But Rajaji's opposition even to the introduction of such a bill was interpreted as being 'more ruthless than any of the actions of British administrators'. Therefore those who were opposed to Rajaji's leadership and his dictatorial actions in the TNCC appealed to Gandhi to advise him not to invoke the Criminal Law Amendment Act against the anti-Hindi agitators.

Gandhi was silent for a long time to the many appeals and the personal letters written by Congressmen in Madras. But when the opposition became vocal in the TNCC he advised his correspondents through his journal *Harijan* 'to study first the facts as Rajaji and his Cabinet see them' before hastily censuring the Ministry's action. He condemned the cry of mother tongue in danger as 'either ignorant or hypocritical' and went on to say that those who looked upon India as one country must 'lend Rajaji their unstinted support' in implementing the policies of the Indian National Congress. As for dealing with the picketers, who indulged in imprecations against those in authority, Gandhi felt that until the correct remedy in terms of satyagraha was found 'the Ministers must be permitted to deal with such offences in the manner they considered best.'[3] Furthermore he gave unqualified support to the application of Criminal Law Amendment Act to deal with the civil resisters.

> We may not make a fetish of Congress resolutions. The Congress has objection not to the name but to the contents

1 *Mail*, 21 August 1938.

2 *Leader*, n.d., quoted in the *Sunday Observer*, 11 September, 1938.

3 *Harijan*, n.d., quoted in the *Sunday Observer*, 11 September 1938.

> of an Act going under that name, and then, too, not to every word or section of an Act .. I see from Rajaji's public declarations that it contains a few sections which suit the new situation that the Congress is facing. If such is the case Rajaji will be foolish if he does not make use of them.[1]

To offset this not too impartial stand, he wanted Rajaji to repeal summarily the obnoxious clauses of the Act without delay, for it was a 'monster' created by the fertile brains of the repressors of the freedom movement. In the same vein he warned his correspondents not to 'hang their trusted servants before they were tried and found wanting.'[2]

Gandhi's views on the anti-Hindi agitation and his support to his chief lieutenant Rajaji, only aggravated the situation. The Congressmen who were offended by his unabashed support of Rajaji, considered it useless to seek his advice on a problem which affected the vital interests of the Tamils of which Gandhi had no awareness or appreciation. They therefore decided to find a solution to the local problem with the help of local leaders rather than to depend on 'North Indian leaders' like Gandhi. As a result they began to strengthen the hands of the leaders of the anti-Hindi movement by offering moral and material support. Many Congressmen, including N. V. Natarajan, the secretary of the Madras District Congress Committee, resigned from the TNCC and became some of the most articulate members of the anti-Hindi movement. Some Congressmen who had already been key figures in the Hindi controversy, like Bharati and Kāñchi Paravasatu Rajagopalachariar, lost even the little faith they had in Gandhi's impartial judgement. At a largely attended public meeting on 11 September, Bharati not only gave expression to this view but also denounced Gandhi in the most sarcastic tone without even considering his stature in the politics of the country. Bharati said:

> The 'Mahatma' for whom we have so much veneration and reverence, is a person who had devoted himself and his life to politics .. (The Mahatma) who condemned

---

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid., quoted in the *Sunday Observer*, 11 September 1938.

> the British for placing on the Statute Book repressive laws, .. should now bless Mr. Achariar (Rajaji) and even say that if Mr. Achariar (had) not used the Act he could consider him foolish.[1]

Bharati's harsh criticism of Gandhi's statements was but a reflection of the prevailing mood among a section of non-Brahmans who were opposed to the compulsory introduction of Hindi in the South. Their opposition to Gandhi's pronouncements took many forms, of which the most important one was to urge the Tamils to renounce their 'blind faith' in Gandhi's political leadership or for that matter, in any North Indian leadership.[2] Gandhi was held to be not a *Mahatma*, a noble soul or a spiritual leader, but a politician from the North whose only objective was to replace British by North Indian domination. As a first step to achieve this end, with the help of some of the local 'Brahman agents' he sought to impose Hindi on the South at gun point. To thwart their combined efforts Bharati, Naicker and others urged the Tamils not merely to organize themselves against Hindi but also to agitate on the lines of the Burmese for the formation of an independent Tamil country where Tamils could be free from emasculation by North Indian cultural influence, economic exploitation and political domination.[3] On the other hand Naicker asked tersely,

> How long are we going to be ruled by Wardha or Gujarat? Hereafter our cry should be Tamilnad for Tamilians .. If we want to live as self-respecting Tamilians, we should see that we carry on a drive against these up-countrymen here. We cannot be any longer deceived .. by nationalism and patriotism. We have been deceived for a long time past and we are now awakened.[4]

After the call was made to the Tamils to intensify their resistance to Hindi and to agitate for a separate Tamilnad, the exacting work of organizing and mobilizing them fell on the shoulders of Naicker. From 1938 onwards Naicker led a section of the Tamils

---

1 *Sunday Observer*, 18 September 1938.

2 *Mail* and *Hindu*, 12 September 1938; *Sunday Observer*, 18 September 1938.

3 *Sunday Observer*, 18 September 1938.

4 *Sunday Observer*, 18 September 1938.

if not to attain their goal of *swaraj* for Tamilnad at least to repeal the element of compulsion in the introduction of Hindi in schools.

III

Apart from strengthening the forces of Tamil nationalism, the period between 1937 and 1938 marked the emergence of Naicker as the leader of the Justice Party and the beginning of the Tamilization of that Party. Although between 1930 and 1937 two out of three in the cabinet were Tamils, the cabinet and the party leadership were in the hands of the Telugus, largely because the finances for running the party came from them. There is no clear evidence from the available records that regular subscriptions were collected from the members, because the yearly confederations and even district conferences were held through the munificence of the zamindars, who also contributed liberally to election funds. In October 1935 the committee for raising funds for the 1937 election could not have collected 89,916 rupees in one day but for the generosity of the zamindars, because the Tamils contributed a mere 10,200 rupees. Of this sum all but 200 rupees came from two zamindars from the Tamil districts.[1] Among the zamindars from the Telugu districts the brunt of the economic burden fell on the Raja of Bobbili. According to Nilkan A. Perumal, the Raja spent over 15 lakhs of his personal money not only to run the party during his tenure of office as the Chief Minister but also met some of the members' election expenses.[2] As a result of their money the Telugus wielded greater power and influence in the party than the Tamils.

With the defeat of the Justice Party in the 1937 election most of the prominent Telugu leaders kept themselves aloof from the party's activities. When the Raja of Bobbili left for England immediately after the elections without deputing anyone to lead the party in his absence, none of the popular Telugu members of the executive committee came forward to shoulder the responsibility. Neither Patro nor Reddi Naidu was prepared to take the leadership.

---

1 P. T. Rajan and S. Kumaraswami Reddiar borh contributed 5,000 rupees each. *Justice*, 9 October 1935; *Mail*, 7 October 1935.

2 Nilkan A. Perumal, *Bobbili*, p. 129; *Sunday Observer*, 19 June 1938.

Rajan and other leading Justicites in the Tamil districts were equally unwilling. They were so dazed with the election results that they lost hope of ever gaining any hold in the politics of the presidency. The council wing of the Justice Party, led by Muthiah Chettiar, was notoriously inactive except during the period of the legislative assembly sessions.[1] Its record in the legislative assembly itself was unbecoming of a responsible opposition, for charges were openly made in party circles that very few attended its sessions regularly, and even those who attended, with some exceptions, invariably voted with the Congress. Even Muthiah Chettiar and Mohamad Usman were often criticized for voting with the government to the chagrin of the council Justicites.[2] Therefore the council led by Chettiar lacked the cohesion and unity which are normally expected of opposition parties in a parliamentary democracy. Those who remained outside the legislature were unenthusiastic, if not indifferent, about reorganizing the party.

With the introduction of compulsory Hindi in the schools opposition to the Congress Ministry began to mount. Opposition came first from the Tamil districts and from Tamil academics. Reddi Naidu, Pannirselvam and Ramasami Naicker in that order joined the band-wagon later. The Justicites as a party, in the absence of the Raja of Bobbili, could not make any stand or decision on the anti-Hindi question. As a result they missed an 'excellent opportunity' to give a 'political character' to the anti-Hindi movement, although the Congress Ministry often criticized the movement as one engineered by the Justice politicians.[3] Though some leading Justicites supported the movement in their individual capacities they only added strength to the anti-Hindi movement without helping the Justice Party stage a come-back in the political arena.

The Justice Party's inability to regain its lost ground in the politics of the country was further indicated by the results of the municipal elections, held in May 1938. Elections were held for 72 out of 82 municipal councils in the presidency. In the absence of proper organization the Justicites prudently decided not to contest, except

1 *Sunday Observer*, 19 June 1938.

2 Interview with Balasubramaniam, 28 July 1969; *Mail*, 1 August 1938.

3 Interview with Kanchi Kalyanasundaram on 19 September 1969; *Mail*, 8 July 1938.

in Virudhunagar which was a centre of the Nadar community in the far South. Its leader, Soundrapandiya Nadar, was still a staunch Justicite enjoying the confidence of a large section of his community. Despite his personal influence, the Justice Party was routed by the Congress, which won all the seats except two. These results were repeated in every other municipality throughout the presidency.[1]

Soon after the municipal election some of the Justicites in the Tamil districts made an attempt to revive the Justice Party. No such effort was made in the Telugu districts by any of the Telugu leaders. Pannirselvam, the deputy leader of the opposition in the Madras Legislative Assembly, while presiding over the Ramnad District Tamils Conference on 12 June, called for a change in the party leadership. Though he paid a glowing tribute to the Raja of Bobbili's 'enormous sacrifices of time and money', still he felt the need of the hour was for a man of the masses capable of infusing fresh blood into the party.[2] One other Justicite, Dewan Bahadur G. Narayanaswami Chetti, concurred with this point of view, but he was more specific and direct than Pannirselvam when he said that the party could not be led in the future by an aristocratic leader like the Raja of Bobbili, for he was 'inaccessible to most' of the members, and therefore, the 'leadership should fall on the younger and more democratic generation if the party was to be brought again to the position it had occupied under Dr. Nair and the Raja of Panagal.'[3] But neither suggested who would be a competent person to take over the leadership of the party, especially when there were no prospects of getting power in the immediate future. Even those who had contested the party leadership in the early 1930s, like Rajan and Muthiah Chettiar, were not anxious to replace the leadership of the Raja of Bobbili. The most articulate members, like P. Balasubramaniam, said that the party needed members who would be willing to sacrifice 'a few tens of rupees' for the sake of the party, rather than any change in leadership.[4]

---

1 *Mail*, 4 May 1938.

2 *Sunday Observer*, 19 June 1938.

3 *Mail*, 26 June 1938.

4 *Sunday Observer*, 19 June 1938.

During this impasse in the Justice circles, Ramasami Naicker began to dominate the anti-Hindi movement. The anti-Hindi leaders needed the help of politicians and especially those like Naicker, because he had an organization with branches in almost all the mofussil towns, two popular Tamil newspapers and a team of speakers in Tamil. Although there was no dearth of speakers in the anti-Hindi League, its activity was not given much publicity by the leading newspapers. The *Hindu*, the *Indian Express*, *Swadesamitran* and *Dinamani*, which at first opposed the introduction of compulsory Hindi, later changed their stand and supported the government. All are popular newspapers, the first two English and the other Tamil dailies. They rarely reported the proceedings of the anti-Hindi meetings. Even if they did, the proceedings of largely attended public meetings addressed by prominent persons were summarized in a few lines. The only popular English daily which gave some importance to the activities of the anti-Hindi League was the *Mail*. The two pro-Congress Tamil weeklies, *Navasakti* and *Tamil Nadu*, also gave moderate publicity to the activities of the anti-Hindi League. Other newpapers which were opposed to the Congress fully covered the proceedings of anti-Hindi meetings, but their circulation was limited to a few thousands. Therefore Naicker's *Viduthalai* and *Kudi Arasu* acted as unofficial organs of the anti-Hindi League. P. Balasubramaniam's English weekly, the *Sunday Observer*, and to a lesser degree the *Justice* and *Nagara Thoodan*, a Tamil weekly published from Trichinopoly, gave wide publicity to the League.[1]

The non-Congress newspapers' staunch support brought the leaders of the anti-Hindi League and those of the Self-Respect movement and the Justice Party closer. This facilitated greater co-operation between the non-Congress politicians and the leaders of the anti-Hindi League. From December 1937 most of the important decisions were taken by them jointly. This gave an opportunity for Naicker to give a political character to his hitherto cultural movement as well as to exploit it to project his own image in the politics of Tamilnad.[2] His followers both in the Self-Respect movement and in the Justice Party took an active part

1 Interview with Kanchi Kalyanasundaram and Vedachalam on 19 September and 27 July 1969 respectively.

2 Ibid.

in running the new Tamilian Association, inaugurated in December 1937, which was intended to protect the interests of the Tamils. Its sub-committees in the districts were controlled by the Self-Respecters. Also, with the approval of the anti-Hindi League, they organized picketing before the Premier's residence and subsequently in front of the schools where Hindi was compulsorily taught from June 1938. Again, in the formation of the first anti-Hindi *jatha* in August the same year at Trichinopoly, the Self-Respecters played no small role. They took an active part in forming anti-Hindi *jathas* in other districts as well. Ramaswami Naicker himself undertook a whirlwind tour of the Tamil districts, addressing on an average three anti-Hindi meetings a day. From 19 to 21 August he addressed 29 public meetings in all the taluks of Salem district.[1]

His speeches delivered at these meetings were published in full in *Kudi Arasu* and *Viduthalai*, not to mention the *Sunday Observer* and the *Justice*, which gave an impression that Naicker was the virtual leader of the Anti-Hindi movement. This impression was further strengthened by the encomiums showered on him by no less a person than Somasundara Bharati.[2] Even Rajaji accused that the anti-Hindi movement was engineered by Bharati and Naicker, the former motivated by anti-Āryan sentiments and the latter by anti-Congress feelings.[3] Pannirselvam, Soundrapandiya Nadar, Samiappa Mudaliar and other Justicites saw in Naicker a magnetic leader capable of arousing the masses, mobilizing and channelling their energies to fight a cause. Khalifullah, the leader of the Muslim League, threw in his lot with Naicker and they pulled well together and organized anti-Hindi *jathas*, first in Trichinopoly and later in other districts. Pannirselvam and Khalifullah's support of Naicker in the anti-Hindi campaign put him in an admirable position in the eyes of minority Christian and Muslim communities in the province. Thus by August 1938 Naicker built up a strong image, if not a following, in the Tamil districts of the presidency.

In September the Raja of Bobbili returned from his foreign tour. His arrival was a great relief in the Justice circles,

1 *Mail*, 21 August 1938.

2 *Sunday Observer*, 18 September 1938.

3 *Mail*, 1 October 1938.

for many hopefully expected that he could breathe a new life into the party and give a fresh lead to the anti-Hindi movement. Their expectation was not in vain. On 11 September 1938, the Raja of Bobbili, in his capacity as the leader of the Justice Party, issued, in the words of *Mail*, a 'very moderate statement' embracing all aspects of anti-Hindi agitation. In his rather exhaustive statement he appealed to the anti-Hindi agitators to abandon all forms of coercive methods and suggested to the government that it should make Hindi an optional subject. He also deprecated the attitude ofthe government in dismissing the anti-Hindi movement as the work of a 'disgruntled few' or as 'wholly insincere', while turning a blind eye to the mounting opposition to Hindi. Furthermore, to ascertain the strength of the opposition, he suggested that the government should constitute an impartial committee, which would command the confidence of the public, to hold a referendum on this issue by secret ballot in the city of Madras.[1]

The terms of the constitution did not then provide for a referendum as suggested by the Raja. But it was regarded by the *Mail* as a 'more reasonable method' of ascertaining the popular view than the simple one of assertion and counter assertion which led nowhere except perhaps to produce much 'exaggerated language' on the part of the ministers and the agitators.[2]

The Raja of Bobbili's pronouncements on the linguistic controversy received sharp criticism from the members of the Congress Ministry. B. Gopal Reddy, the Minister for Local Administration, denounced the very idea of holding a referendum and also questioned the Raja's qualifications to advise the government.[3] Rajaji, who was known for his temperateness in expression, was even more disparaging in his criticism than any of his colleagues in the ministry. In his reply he condemned the Raja for making 'unheard-of proposals' which would only mean the 'permanent establishment of the power of scurrilous libel and goondaism' instead of helping the people 'to realize orderly self-rule and civilization.'[4] Furthermore he maintained that, since his govern-

1 *Hindu* and *Mail*, 11 September 1938.

2 *Mail*, 12 September 1938.

3 *Mail*, 15 September 1938.

4 *Sunday Observer*, 18 September 1938; *Mail*, 12 September 1938.

ment had been elected on the basis of the Congress programme, he was obliged to fulfil it, despite the 'show of opposition' in some quarters.[1]

The unexpected severity with which the Congress Ministers reacted to the Raja's suggestion only strengthened the opposition to Hindi. The Justicites got the signal from the Raja to participate in the anti-Hindi campaign not in their individual capacity as had been the case since 1937, but as members of the Justice Party. He himself sent a personal message to Bharati, associating himself with the meeting held on 11 September 1938, to give a welcome to the anti-Hindi marchers from Trichinopoly. In that message the Raja congratulated the marchers on their 'great achievement' and advised them to carry on peaceful propaganda in their respective places until compulsory Hindi was abolished.[2] A week later he announced that the executive committee of the Justice Party would shortly meet, not only to discuss the political situation obtaining in the province, but to consider the issues arising out of the Congress Ministry's language policy.

But before the executive committee could meet and take a decision on the compulsory study of Hindi in schools the government acted swiftly to silence the opposition. As a first step it tried to intimidate the newspapers which were supporting the anti-Hindi campain by raiding *Viduthalai* office on 5 October 1938. The raid was intended to gag the only Tamil daily, which had been acting as the unofficial organ of the anti-Hindi campaigners. The police confiscated some of the back numbers of *Viduthalai*, the account book and all correspondences relating to the anti-Hindi campaign. On the following day the editor, Pandit Muthuswami Pillai, and the publisher, E. V. Krishnaswami Naicker—brother of Ramasami Naicker—were arrested for publishing since 19 August a series of letters addressed to 'Tamilian Friends' in the form of articles. The object of those articles was to blame the influence of Āryan culture for the degradation of the status of women in the South, to condemn Rajaji's ministry as nothing but an alien rule, to attribute unworthy motives to Rajaji

1 Ibid., 18 September 1938.

2 *Mail*, 12 September 1938; *Sunday Observer*, 18 September 1938.

in introducing Hindi, and to incite people against the government.[1] Both Muthuswami Pillai and Krishnaswami Naicker were charged with anti-government activities and with fomenting racial trouble in the country. Bâil refused, they were remanded into custody until 15 October. The publication of the paper itself was seriously disrupted causing an initial setback for the anti-Hindi campaigners. They were tried in January 1939, found guilty of disrupting communal harmony in society and sentenced to six months simple imprisonment.[2]

The government's next target was Ramasami Naicker, whom it considered as the power behind the anti-Hindi movement. Before imprisoning him the police formally filled a charge sheet against Naicker on 3 November for inciting women to picket the Hindu Theological High School with the intention of deterring students and teachers from entering or approaching it. The charge sheet was framed on the basis of two speeches he made on 13 and 14 November; the first at the Tamilnad Women's Conference, and the second at the Peddunaickenpet Tamilar Kazhagam, both in Madras. The Women's Conference, which was organized by some of the leading non-Brahman ladies of Madras[3] to protest against the imposition of Hindi in schools, was addressed by Naicker. He gave a pursuasive speech in which he explained to the womenfolk why they should oppose 'Hindi imperialism' and exhorted them to arrest its expansion in the South 'even at

1 'The writer of those articles refers to the degradation of the Malayalee women as resulting from the mixture of Sanskrit culture with Malayalam which is said to have led the Brahm(a)ns to consort with Malayalee women. He also ascribes prostitution by dedication of girls to the temples in Tamilnad to Sanskrit influence, and describes the Madras Government as an Aryan government intended to enslave the Tamilians and to reduce the Tamilian women to a disgraceful plight'. *Mail*, 9 October 1938; *Kudi Arasu*, 15 October 1938; Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, pp. 182-83.

2 M. Ilanceliyan, *Tamilan Totutta Mutal Por*, p. 84.

3 The Tamilnad Women's Conference was organized by Mrs Meenambal Sivaraj, wife of a High Court judge Rao Bahadur N. Sivaraj; Mrs T. Neelambigai Ammaiyar, daughter of the distinguished Tamil scholar, Maraimalai Adigal; Dr(Mrs.) Dharmambal, a social worker and others. This conference was significant also because Ramasami Naicker was given the title *Periyar* which goes as a prefix with his name to-day. Many now call him simply *Periyar*, which in English means the venerable or the great man.

the cost of their lives.'[1] Though this speech was neither forceful nor fiery when compared with the speeches he had made on other occasions on the same subject, its impact was so great that on the following day women for the first time participated in the anti-Hindi agitation in large numbers. Five of these women, who had arranged the women's conference, picketed the Hindu Theological High School and they were arrested and sentenced to six weeks imprisonment. On the 14th itself the Tamilar Kazhagam organized a protest meeting at which Naicker not only extolled the action of the five women who had gone to jail but made a fervent appeal to other women in Tamilnad to emulate their spirit and come forward to defend their mother tongue from the 'onslaught of an Āryan and alien language.'[2] After that speech large numbers of women participated in the anti-Hindi satyagraha, and, until Hindi was withdrawn from the schools in 1940, 73 women who led the picketing in front of the school were sent to jail under the Criminal Law Amendment Act. These two speeches which formed the basis of the charge sheet were not taken up by the court before the first week of December 1938.

Simultaneously the government focussed its attention on the Raja of Bobbili because it suspected that he would exploit the anti-Hindi movement for political purposes. Despite the Justice Party's disorganized condition, the Raja had magnetism, could command a following and had the shrewedness to whip up public feelings against the Congress Ministry in the Telugu districts where the opposition to Hindi was not so vocal as in Tamilnad. In the Tamil districts the agitation had already caused law and order problems for the government, and the image of the Congress was tarnished. Picketing and arrests became a daily feature, and over 215 agitators had been sent to jail by August.[3] Moreover, communal and racial controversies were revived to the disgust of the enlightened section of the Tamil community. The Ministry was, therefore, anxious to prevent the agitation from spreading to the Telugu districts. To do this the Premier was suspected by leading Justicites of having used the Madras Land Act to force the Raja to resign from the leadership of the Justice Party.

1 *Kudi Arasu*, 19 November 1938; M. R. O., *Public, Ordinary Series G. O. No.* 241, 3 February 1939.

2 *Sunday Observer*, 20 November 1938; *Kudi Arasu*, 19 November 1938.

3 *Mail*, 15 August 1938.

The Madras Estates Land Act of 1908 was then under the consideration of a Joint Select Committee headed by T. Prakasam, the Minister for Land Revenue, to abolish all intermediate land tenures and to secure permanent possession of land to the tiller of the soil. As any amendment to the original Act would affect the vital interests of the zamindars, they met the Premier to present their case and if possible to gain some concessions in the proposed amendments. He seemed to have promised to take note of their interests while formulating the amendments provided they persuaded the Raja of Bobbili to resign from the leadership of the Justice Party. The zamindar group acted as an intermediary, met the Raja, acquainted him with their discussions with the Premier and reasoned with him about the necessity of resigning from the Justice Party, if not for his own benefit at least in the larger interests of the zamindari community. Although he refused to consider their request at first, he later gave in to them.

No records are available to check the foundations for this rather strong suspicion current in the political circles, but many leading Justicites do not rule it out as an explanation for the Raja's unexpected resignation in November 1938.[1] His biographer Nilkan A. Perumal also lends support to this suspicion when he touches on the question of the Raja's resignation from the Justice Party.[2]

If one considers the events that followed soon after the Raja's return from abroad, the suspicion may have some basis. The first statement he made on his arrival was on the anti-Hindi campaign; in this he not only extended his moral support to the Tamil leaders but also justified the opposition parties making political capital out of a 'first class issue.' Besides, to revive the Justice Party, he sounded his colleagues on the possibility of convening the annual confederation before the end of that year. Accordingly it was planned that the executive committee should meet in November to consider the feasibility of this proposal. Before the committee could meet the Raja sent in his resignation without adducing proper reasons;[3] this only strengthened the

1 Interviews with Vedachalam and Balasubramaniam on 27 and 28 July 1969 respectively. Nilkan A. Perumal, *Bobbili*, p. 134.

2 Nilkan A. Perumal, *Bobbili*, p. 134.

3 *Sunday Observer*, 6 November 1938.

suspicion. With his resignation the influence of the Telugus in the Justice Party began to wane.

The Raja's resignation was received jubilantly in Congress circles, for they assumed that the disintegration of the Justice Party had begun. Since the Justice Party had very few leaders of his calibre who could rally the Telugus round them its influence could be expected to wane in the Telugu districts. Their expectation was based on two factors: firstly, very few Telugu leaders were prepared to spend their money and time on a moribund organization, and, secondly, they themselves were more concerned with forming a separate Telugu province than with reviving the Justice Party. Naturally, therefore, the Congressmen predicted that henceforth the activities of the Justice Party would be confined to the Tamil districts and that the chances of the anti-Hindi campaign spreading to the Telugu districts were rather thin.

The Raja's resignation was a bolt from the blue for the members of the executive committee of the Justice Party, for they were expecting the annual confederation to meet, the first of its kind since 1937, so that they could work out new methods to revive the party. But his sudden resignation compelled them to relegate all other issues to the background and concern themselves with questions of how the party could survive and who would lead it and preside over the confederation.

Some of the members of the executive committee sounded the leading Justicites about these matters. Reddi Naidu and Patro from the Telugu districts, and Rajan, Muthiah Chettiar and Pannirselvam from the Tamil districts were offered the leadership of the Justice Party, and each of them declined.[1] But some among them suggested that Ramasami Naicker was the most competent person to lead the party at that juncture. The same opinion was also prevalent among the Justicites in the Tamil districts. One P. L. Ramaswami Mittadai of Pagaluatti, the president of the local branch of the Justice Party, wrote a long letter in the *Sunday Observer*, in which he argued that a 'man of the masses', like Naicker, should lead the party if it was to survive the political crises in the presidency.[2]

---

1 Interview with Balasubramaniam on 28 July 1969.

2 *Sunday Observer*, 13 November 1938.

Unable to take any decision, both the members of the executive committee and the reception committee held a joint meeting in Madras, under the presidentship of Rao Bahadur A. Doraiswami Mudaliar, on 29 November 1938, to choose the president for the confederation. Many letters and telegrams were received from district and taluk branches and from prominent Justicites suggesting that Ramasami Naicker should be requested to preside over the confederation. A resolution to that effect, moved by Muthiah Chettiar was seconded and supported by Pannirselvam and K. C. Subramaniam Chettiar, a member of the reception committee. The executive committee also appealed to Naicker to contest the case filed against him by the Madras Government so that he might be free until the end of December to preside over the deliberations of the annual confederation.[1]

Nevertheless, Naicker preferred not to contest the case, as he expected no fair judgement from the judiciary controlled by the Congress Government. As a result, when he was tried for the offences detailed in the charge sheet on 5 December 1938, he refused to cross-examine the witnesses. However, when the prosecution evidence was closed, Naicker, wanted the copies of the deposition of witnesses in order to file a statement in the court, which he considered would 'prevent the public from forming a wrong impression and to prove his innocence.'[2] On the 6th Naicker made his statement in the court and emphasized three points to disprove the government contentions, which were the basis of the charges framed against him. He said that the opposition to Hindi had started soon after the Self-Respect Conference, held at Nannilam in 1930, but not after the publication of the government order on 21 April 1938, as contended by the government; that the picketings before the Premier's house and the Hindu Theological High School were intended not to coerce the Premier, but to show the government that the anti-Hindi agitation had public support; that none of his speeches, including those that were referred to in the charge sheet, had incited any person to break the law of the state, and that, such being the case, he was not guilty

---

1 *Mail*, 30 November 1938.

2 *Kudi Arasu*, 10 December 1938; *Mail* and *Hindu*, 6 December 1938; M.R.O., *Public, Ordinary Series*, *G. O. No.* 241, 3 February 1939.

of any of the charges cited.[1] After setting out the facts of the case and tracing the growth of the anti-Hindi movement in Madras, the Magistrate said that as a result of Naicker's speech at the women's conference, the women who were not involved in the movement before came out in a 'large procession', picketed and courted imprisonment. He further observed:

> It is quite clear from his own statement that the object of his openly coming forward to incite the women to transgress the law is his diffidence that the public have been regarding that this movement is supported by a single man the accused. He has therefore tried to give some momentum to the illegal activities of the organisers of this anti-Hindi campaign by working on the feelings of the women. There is no doubt that the object of this movement is to inflict tyranny and oppression on the innocent students and teachers of the Hindu Theological High School who for no fault or sin of theirs are day after day subjected to molestation and prevented from going to the school and also disturbed when they are at work in the class. I can find no justification for this being done nor can I believe as represented by the accused that their object is to bring to the notice of the Prime Minister the strength of feeling against Hindi. There are certainly constitutional means of doing it. The method of coercion adopted is neither proper nor can it succeed in the end, however much the supporters may feel that it is the way to success. The accused has not cross examined the witnesses and the prosecution evidence has not been controverted in any way nor has the accused adduced any evidence to rebut the charges framed against him.[2]

With this preamble, the Magistrate sentenced Ramasami Naicker to one year rigorous imprisonment and to a fine of 1,000 rupees in respect of each of the offences on which he was convicted. In default of payment of the fine he would undergo rigorous imprison-

---

1 M. R. O., *Public, Ordinary Series, G. O. No.* 241, 3 February 1939. *Mail* and *Hindu*, 6 and 7 December 1938, respectively.

2 M. R. O., *Public, Ordinary Series, G. O.* 241, 3 February 1939.

ment for six months in each case, and the sentences would run concurrently.[1]

The harsh sentence passed on Naicker was viewed as a severe blow to the prestige of the Congress ministry in Madras. Criticisms against the severity of the sentence poured in from all quarters. Public men and the press unanimously denounced its repressive policy and regarded the sentence as excessive, considering the charges levelled against him. The *Indian Express*, a pro-Congress English daily, condemned the fine as a 'barbarous one' and called for the immediate separation of the executive from the judiciary, especially in view of the excessive sentence passed on Naicker for leading a movement which the government disliked.[2] The *Bombay Sentinel* denounced the sentence as 'vindictive' and reminiscent of the civil disobedience days.[3] Srinivasa Iyengar and Varadarajulu Naidu not only disapproved of the sentence passed on Naicker but also took exception to the use of the Criminal Law Amendment Act for punishing him. Naidu warned that the policy of the government would aggravate communal bitterness and damage the cause for which the national movement stood.[4]

On account of the mounting opposition to the severe sentence passed on Naicker, the government changed rigorous imprisonment into simple imprisonment. He was also transferred from 'C' to 'A' class, usually allocated to the political prisoners.[5]

The ministry did not anticipate such harsh criticism of its action against Naicker. Nor did it expect that his incarceration

1 Ibid.; *Sunday Observer*, 11 December 1938; M. R. O., *Public, Ordinary Series. G. O.* 241, 3 February 1939.

2 *Indian Express*, n. d., quoted in the *Sunday Observer*, 11 December 1938.

3 *Bombay Sentinel*, n. d., quoted in the *Sunday Observer*, 26 December 1938.

4 *Navasakti* and *Nagara Toodan*, doubted the wisdom of the Congress Ministry in clapping Naicker in prison at the age of sixty. They warned that this action against him would only intensify the anti-Hindi agitation. *Ananda Vikatan*, a pro-Congress Tamil weekly, paid a glowing tribute to Naicker's abilities as a campaigner and agitator. 'It was the curious play of fate', considered *Ananda Vikatan*, 'that he should go to prison while his close friend was the Premier of this Province'. *Navasakti*, 9 December 1938; *Nagara Toodan*, 11 December 1938; *Ananda Vikatan*, n.d., quoted in M. Ilanceliyan, *Tamilan Totutta Mutal Por*, pp. 162-63; *Mail*, 18 and 26 December 1938.

5 M. R. O., *Public, Ordinary Series, G. O. No.* 241, 3 February 1939.

would have the least deterrent effect on the anti-Hindi agitators. As the agitation further intensified, the convictions also increased. Only 364 had been convicted for offences arising from picketing before the Premier's residence and the Hindu Theological High School before Naicker went to jail.[1] But this figure rose to 1,001 before he was released on considerations of health in April the following year.[2]

As a result of his imprisonment Naicker's personal image rocketed sky high, to the bewilderment of the Congress circles. At least one public meeting was held in some of the Tamil districts to condemn the government's language policy and to support Naicker's stand against Hindi.[3] Between 7 and 31 December over 500 meetings were held in the Tamil districts to protest against the sentence passed on Naicker. He was regarded as a saviour and protector of the Tamil culture and language and was paid encomiums as such at these meetings. Naicker's birthday was celebrated together with the anti-Hindi meetings throughout the southern part of the province. Whether it was Naicker's birthday celebrations, anti-Hindi meetings or any other meeting convened by the non-Congress leaders, Naicker's portrait was either unveiled or adorned the dais. All the non-Brahman leaders who presided over these meetings, without exception, unreservedly paid a warm tribute to Naicker's services to the people, his unshakable faith in his convictions and his determination not to be cowed by the 'intimidations of the Congress bureaucracy'. The birthday celebrations at Madras on 18 December and the Fourth Provincial Tamilians Conference held at Vellore on 27 December 1938 were significant for the presence of all non-Congress leaders in the Tamil districts and the unanimity of views they expressed on the need to preserve

1 The statements furnished by the Inspector-General of Prisons showing the number of persons sentenced in connection with the anti-Hindi movement up to 24 November 1938 varies. One statement gives 380 and the other 364. Both figures are for the city of Madras alone. M. R. O., *Public, Ordinary Series*, G. O. No. 237, 3 February 1939.

2 M. Ilanceliyan, *Tamilan Totutta Mutal Por*, p. 188; Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, p. 190. M. R. O., *Public, Ordinary Series, G. O. No.* 597, 13 April 1939.

3 *Kudi Arasu*, 10, 17, 24 and 31 December 1938; *Mail* 13, 14, 15, 19, 26, 28 29 and 31 December 1938; *Swadesamitran*, 7, 8, 9, 15, 20, 26, 28 and 29 December 1938.

and foster the culture and the language of the Tamils, especially in view of what they considered to be the 'Aryan rule over the Dravidians.'[1] At the conclusion of these meetings the audience stood up and took an oath to stand by Naicker and support him in his 'national struggle against the Hindi imperialism'.

Naicker's growing popularity as the champion of the Tamils among a large section of non-Brahmans in the Tamil districts was an added incentive for the Justicites to stick to their original decision to elect him as the president of the forthcoming confederation. Although at the November meeting they had unanimously agreed to elect him as president, that decision had to be formally approved at the special meeting of the reception committee scheduled to be held on 22 December. But since Naicker was convicted on the 6th, it met urgently on the 8th and confirmed the decision that had already been taken.[2]

The reception committee's decision opened a new chapter in the annals of the Justice Party because for the first time a commoner was elected as the president of the confederation. According to the unwritten convention of the party, whosoever was elected as the president for the annual confederation would automatically become the leader of the party. And he would remain so as long as he commanded the confidence of the members. Apart from this convention and Naicker's stature among the masses, the unexpected and untimely resignation of the Raja of Bobbili and the reluctance of others to take up the leadership left the executive committee of the Justice Party with no other option but to invite Naicker to preside over the confederation and lead the party at a crucial time.

1 *Mail*, 19 and 27 December 1938.

2 *Mail*, 8 December 1938.

CHAPTER—V

THE ANTI-HINDI MOVEMENT AND THE FORMATION OF DRAVIDA KAZHAGAM

1938 – 1944

I

Second Phase of the Anti-Hindi Agitation and the Strengthening of the Dravidanad Demand

II

Justice Politics and the Formation of the Dravidian Federation or Dravida Kazhagam

THE ANTI-HINDI MOVEMENT AND THE FORMATION OF DRAVIDA KAZHAGAM

On the outbreak of the Second World War, the Congress Ministry led by Rajaji went out of office following the British Government's decision to involve India in the war. Consequently the Justice Party was left alone in the arena of politics. Under Naicker's leadership it agitated against Hindi in the first quarter of 1940 till it was withdrawn as a compulsory subject of study and demanded the formation of a separate country for the Dravidians. The demand for Dravidanad was vigorously made, but it did not evoke response beyond the Tamil districts. Even among the Tamils it did not gain as much support as did the Congress demand for *swaraj*. Its demand was of more immediate relevance than the less pressing need for Dravidanad. Apart from making propaganda, Naicker as leader of the Justice Party failed to build his campaign on a sound democratic basis which could have helped him agitate for Dravidanad on constitutional lines. Instead he chose the easy path. He co-operated with the British regime in its war preparations in the hope that it would concede the demand for Dravidanad after the war, and he sought the support and help of the leaders of the Muslim League and the Scheduled Castes Federation. But what Naicker obviously overlooked was that the demand should have the support of the people rather than the verbal support and sympathy of other parties with similar demands. Without the unanimous support of the people whom Naicker claimed to represent, his movement failed.

During this period Naicker's leadership did not materially change the fortunes of the Justice Party in the politics of the country either. No doubt it was true that when he was elected as the party leader great enthusiasm prevailed, and some even hoped that the party would regain its former glory. But events belied such hopes, for Naicker turned out to be an agitator and not a leader with the intellectual stature and political insight to fight issues on constitutional and democratic lines. Consequently what Naicker did on becoming the leader of the Justice Party was to break its established canons, tighten his grip on it and finally and inevitably to change its

political complexion. In the words of K. M. Balasubramaniam, 'Naicker slowly changed the Justice Party's colour, watered it down, almost eliminated it and got it merged with the Dravida Kazhagam.'[1]

I

The fourteenth confederation of the Justice Party began its three-day session at Madras on 29 December 1938 with a huge procession from Varadarajapuram in Egmore to the venue of the confederation on Island Grounds in Mount Road. The centre of attraction of the procession was a chariot on which four life-size portraits of Ramasami Naicker were put up, facing the directions and these were enclosed in a representation of a prison cell. The Tamil mother-goddess was depicted as mourning over his imprisonment. Volunteers wearing red shirts and waving red flags[2] with 'Justice Party' printed on them marched ahead of the procession shouting 'Long Live Periyar' and 'Long Live Tamil' led by two captains on horseback. The procession which left Varadarajapuram at noon with over 20,000 people marched through some of the profusely decorated main streets in Egmore and Chintadripet, mobilizing public sympathy for the incarcerated Naicker and the cause for which he stood, before reaching Napier Park at 2 p.m.[3] There it halted for about an hour for other minor processions from various parts of the city to join it. Before 3 p.m. the procession swelled to 30,000 and then proceeded to the conference *pandal*.[4]

The confederation, which was attended by more than 1,000 delegates and 10,000 visitors from all parts of the presidency, commenced its proceedings in the evening. At the request of the members of the executive committee, Pannirselvan deputized for Naicker as the president of the confederation. Many leading Justicites and Self-Respecters addressed the audience.

---

1 Interview with Balasubramaniam on 28 July 1969.

2 No special significance was attached to the red shirt and red flag except that they were temporarily adopted as the party's uniform and flag respectively. Until then the party had no flag of its own and the Union Jack was hoisted at the annual confederations of the Justice Party.

3 *Kudi Arasu*, 31 December 1938.

4 Interview with Vedachalam and Sivagnanam on 27 July and 10 September 1969 respectively. *Mail*, 29 December 1938.

If the Justicites concentrated the attack in their speeches on the measures adopted and the policies pursued by the Congress Ministry, the Self-Respecters played largely on the emotions of the audience. The Justicites in general and Patro in particular were specific in their criticisms. According to Patro the communal representation in the public services were more or less a fiction and the Agriculturists' Debt Relief Act, which was intended to offer relief to the indebted peasants, was an 'unqualified failure', in effect increasing litigation and dislocation of rural credit. In matters of administration, he said, the Ministry was 'bankrupt in ideas' and had made no sound laws for the uplift of rural population.[1] Pannirselvam who was an arch critic of Rajaji, accused his Ministry of preaching nationalism but practising 'rank communalism', promoting the interests of 'over represented communities', and appointing even retired officials in the 'name of efficiency' in preference to 'competent' non-Brahmans.[2] The Self-Respecters like Alagiriswamy, A. Ponnambalanar and others fanned the flame of hatred towards Brahmans by their provocative speeches and emphasized the increased bitterness that had been engendered by the anti-Hindi campaign. Tamil separatism was preached, and the North Indians were despised for their imperialist designs.[3]

Naicker's presidential address, which was read by Pannirselvam, outlined the programme of the future activities of the Justice Party. It was an eloquent exercise in balancing the views of the moderate and militant wings and an attempt to refute the charges made against the party. In the first place Naicker defended and

---

1 *Mail*, 30 December 1938; *Kudi Arasu*, 7 January 1939.

2 To substantiate his charges Pannirselvam cited two cases as examples of the Ministry's bias towards Brahmans. According to him Dewan Bahadur C. Govindan Nayar, Secretary to the Law Department, was refused extension of service on the excuse that the government service rules did not permit extension or reappointment in the public services beyond the age of 55. Bur the Government of Orissa appointed him as the Chief Secretary after he had retired from the Madras Government. While a retired Brahman officer was appointed 'lay-secretary' in the general Hospital in Madras on a monthly salary of 300 rupees in addition to his pension. When questioned in the Assembly, the Minister of Health explained that the appointment was not made on 'communal considerations but on grounds of efficiency.' *Mail*, 1 January 1939.

3 *Kudi Arasu*, 7 January 1939.

accepted the communal side of the party as its cardinal principle because of the prevailing discontent among non-Brahmans which was the result of the administrative policies pursued by the government. According to the Justicites the Communal G. O. was not strictly followed in the public services, and in the medical services it was totally withdrawn. Selection committees constituted to advise the heads of institutions in selecting students to professional colleges were abolished, much to the disadvantage of under-privileged communities.[1] Naicker, therefore, reasoned:

> If 97 per cent of the people become alive to their rights and realize the absurdity of the claims of the so-called superior caste and that is called 'communalism', I wish that we may always have that 'communalism' as the cardinal principle of life.[2]

Although this was interpreted by the *Mail* as a return to the 'robust non-Brahminism' of Dr. T. M. Nair's times, Naicker did not concede the demands of the extremists to amend the Clause IV of the revised constitution so that the party could remain exclusively a non-Brahman organisation as originally envisaged. Secondly, the party should defend the 'rightful supremacy of the Tamil language' and oppose any 'incursions of Hindi' on the Tamil country. Yet another aim of the party was to agitate for the creation of an independent Tamilnad with status similar to that enjoyed by Burma and Ceylon. But before independence could be claimed for Tamilnad, foreign domination should cease in the Indian sub-continent. For that Naicker also wanted the party's constitution to be changed so that its political objective could be *purna swaraj*, instead of *swaraj* for India 'as a component part of the British Commonwealth'.[3]

Naicker's stand on communal justice, his opposition to Hindi and his call for independent Tamilnad were put in the form of resolutions and were adopted unanimously as the future programme. Other resolutions expressed disapproval of some of the measures taken by the Congress leaders soon after accepting office. The Congress rulers permitted the local boards to install Gandhi's

1 *Kudi Arasu*, 31 December 1938.

2 *Mail*, 29 December 1938.

3 *Kudi Arasu*, 31 December 1938; *Mail*, 29 December 1938.

portraits in their premises and used the Sanskrit word *Sri* instead of the English word Mister before surnames. As the Justicites took strong exception to these they passed two resolutions, one condemning the government for placing Gandhi's portraits in the same category as that of their Imperial Majesties and another calling for the immediate use of the Tamil honorific word *Thiruvalar* for *Sri*.[1]

The provincial Congress leaders, who had been closely following the reported proceedings of the Justice Party confederation, were not perturbed by the militancy of the Justicites under Naicker's leadership. The Congress men had an overwhelming majority to defeat any of the moves of the Justicites in the legislative assembly and were prepared to tackle any agitation outside it. However, the Congress leaders were concerned about the communal colour given to Congress policies and the campaign of hatred so 'systematically propagated' against Brahmans and the leaders of the Indian National Congress.[2] They were equally alarmed at the centrifugal tendency emerging among the Tamils as evidenced by the demand for secession from the rest of India. Pannirselvam's statements at the confederation regarding Āryan-Dravidian racial theories and his consistent and constant propaganda against Brahmans were looked on as a serious threat to communal harmony. Rajaji took strong exception to his preaching hatred as a political creed and ridiculed him for going back to 'antediluvian days.'[3] The Justice confederation, according to Rajaji, was 'surcharged with hatred, malice and vengeance' against certain classes of people and was actuated not by love of the masses but by antipathy towards the Congress.[4] On the other hand the pro-Congress newspapers, like the *Hindu* and *Swadesamitran*, were equally critical of the proceedings of the Justice confederation. The former despised Naicker's

---

1 *Kudi Arasu*, 7 January 1939; *Mail*, 31 December 1938.
The then Congress Government spurned these resolutions in 1937, but the Justicites' demands were finally fulfilled after 30 years, when the D.M.K. formed its first ministry in 1967. Since then *Thiru* has replaced *Sri* in all official correspondences and portraits of the Tamil poet, Tiruvalluvar, have displaced Gandhi's portraits from all the provincial government buildings.

2 *Swadesamitran*, 1 January 1939.

3 *Hindu*, 1 January 1939.

4 *Mail*, 1 January 1939.

address as a 'hymn of hate,'[1] and the latter considered that the conference proceedings only helped to strengthen communal and parochial feelings instead of improving the image of the party as a suitable alternative to the Congress.[2]

The Justicites, on the contrary, regarded the confederation as a turning point in the annals of the party. Many hoped that it would re-emerge as a force to be reckoned within the politics of the province. Leading Justicites like Dewan Bahadur A. Venugopal Mudaliar and C. G. Netto felt that the party had passed from the hands of a 'coterie of aristocrats' into those of the people, and hoped that it would strongly re-organize itself for its chosen mission in the politics of the country. Others placed their faith not in the party as such but in Ramasami Naicker, whom they regarded as the 'man of the moment' to deliver the Tamil country from the 'thraldom of Brahman-ridden Congress.'[3]

The immediate concern of the leaders of the Justice Party was to keep alive the enthusiasm generated among the members at the time of the confederation. Various suggestions were put forward. Some suggested agitation for the demand of Dravidanad and others, protest meetings against Naicker's incarceration. Still others thought that, in the absence of Naicker, no new agitation should be started beyond strengthening the hands of the anti-Hindi campaigners. Finally, at an informal party meeting on 3 January 1939, it was agreed upon that public meetings in the Tamil districts should be held in order to protest against the imposition of Hindi and demand Naicker's release from prison.[4]

According to their decision, meetings and processions were organized in many places. As these activities were conducted under the aegis of the Justice Party, the Congress hierarchy in the Tamil districts directed its volunteers to arrange meetings and processions to counter the activities of the Justicites and to mobilize support for retaining Hindi in schools. Sometimes, as in Kumbakonam on 9 January 1939 rival meetings and processions were held simultaneously in two different places in the same town or village,

1 *Hindu*, n.d., quoted in the *Sunday Observer*, 15 January 1939.

2 *Swadesamitran*, 1 January 1939.

3 *Sunday Observer*, 15 January and 5 February 1939.

4 *Kudi Arasu*, 7 *January*, 1939.

affording opportunities for trouble. During the first half of January 1939 two or three minor clashes between the Justice and the Congress volunteers took place but none had any serious consequence.[1] Nevertheless during the same period clashes of a serious nature did occur, and the rival groups fought each other with stones, sticks and soda-water bottles causing public disturbance and damage to property. Elements from each camp persistently disturbed the other's public meetings or provoked the processionists and precipitated street brawls. One such disturbance took place in the city of Madras on 8 January 1939 when the anti-Hindi agitators marched in procession from Georgetown to Washermanpet.

On that day an anti-Hindi procession of 5,000 people led by C. Basu Dev, a pro-Justice Party trade unionist, started from Kasi Viswanathar temple at Georgetown at 9.00 a.m. It marched through the main streets of Choolai, and Purasawalkam and came to Robinson Park at Washermanpet at 11.00 a.m. Another huge procession, taken out from Washermanpet, passed through various streets and reached the park and joined the procession that came from Georgetown to the park. When the joint procession of over 12,000 reached Kalingarayan Street, Washermanpet, a number of Congressmen and sympathizers of Hindi jeered at the processionists and called them *kulippataikal* or 'hirelings'. The processionists retaliated by denouncing them as *Tamil Turokikal* (traitors to the Tamil language) and *Brahmana Adiyatkal* (slaves of Brahmans). The shouting match erupted into violence. The processionists were hit by a rain of soda-water bottles and they in turn pelted the pro-Hindi volunteers with stones. The police intervened and arrested 12 persons including six Congressmen. In the melee many persons received serious injuries and some policemen were hit by bottles.[2]

Violent clashes of similar nature between the pro and the anti-Hindi volunteers in the Tamil districts became a regular feature. At Kumbakonam on 9 January 1939, a pro-Hindi procession was

---

1 *NAI., Home, Political, File No.* 18/I/39; *Poll,* 1939, *D.O. No. P.* 4-I, *Confidential Fortnightly Reports, from G. T. Boag, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to F. H. Puckle, Secretary to Home Department, Government of India,* 19 *January,* 1939, *p. I.*

2 *Mail,* 9 January 1939; *Kudi Arasu,* 14 January 1939.

stoned and as a result some marchers sustained serious injuries.[1] The government promulgated prohibitory orders at Tiruvarur and in Madura for the first two weeks in February in anticipation of communal clashes there. Police permission to hold public meetings arranged by the Justicites or the leaders of the anti-Hindi movement was refused.[2]

While the encounters between the pro and the anti-Hindi volunteers were on the increase the government's attitude remained intransigent. It refused to revise or modify its language policy in the least. On 1 January 1939, its chief spokesman Rajaji said at Rajapalayam that he could cancel the order on Hindi by a 'mere stroke of the pen', but he would not do so because that would lower the prestige of the popular government. He said,

> If a small number of people wanted to prevent a popular government put in by a vast majority of the people from carrying out its legitimate duties, then that government could use any provision of the law or any other weapon available to carry out such duties.[3]

The same firmness was discernible in the replies given by Rajaji in the legislative assembly whenever questions were asked about anti-Hindi agitation or matters relating to it. To a question by M. C. Raja whether it was a government policy to 'crush the anti-Hindi movement' Rajaji replied in the negative. But quickly added:

> The Government intend to give full effect to their decision to make the acquisition of a working knowledge of Hindustani, a part of the regular course of studies in schools and to overcome any attempt to frustrate this intention by unlawful means adopted by persons whose views carry no authority in educational matters.[4]

True to this position, the government used its weapons effectively to put down the agitators whenever occasions arose. And by 31

---

1 *Mail*, 9 January 1939.

2 *Mail*, 27 February 1939.

3 Quotation taken from Nilkan A. Perumal, Rajaji: *A Biographical Study* (Calcutta, 1948), p. 52.

4 M.R.O., *Public*, *G.O.* No. 240, 3 January 1939.

January, 683 men and 36 women were sent to prison under the Criminal Law Amendment Act.[1]

According to the fortnightly report sent by the Chief Secretary of the Government of Madras to the Secretary of Home Department, Government of India, the figures of arrests and convictions in Madras during the same period were 691 and 669 respectively.[2] Furthermore intemperate language was used against the oppositionists. At a public meeting no less a person than Rajaji himself characterized the anti-Hindi controversy as 'not a fight between Hindi and Tamil but between liberalism and narrow mindedness.'[3] At another public meeting he derided those who opposed Hindi as *arivilis* (men lacking knowledge or judgement) and as hirelings recruited for a mere pittance.[4]

Although Rajaji's allegations were promptly denied, instances were not wanting to prove that initially the volunteers were recruited from Ramnad, Tinnevelly and Madura to agitate before the Premier's residence and later before the schools were Hindi was taught. But once the agitation gained momentum further large scale recruitment was stopped. Such recruitments were, however, made discriminately in select centres, in the southernmost Tamil districts. As an inducement the recruits were offered a free return passage by train, free board and lodging and some pocket-money. This was brought out in the Madras Chief Secretary's report to the Home Department in Delhi. He wrote that the anti-Hindi agitators were 'mostly young men from Tamil districts of little or no education, who for a free ticket to Madras and free boarding (sic) are prepared to defy the law.[5] Neither Rajaji's statements nor the government's

1 *MLAD*, Vol. IX (January 1939), p. 652;

2 NAI., *Political Home, File No*. 18/I/39, *Poll*, 1939, *D.O. No*. 4-2, *Confidential Fortnightly Reports from, G.T. Boag, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to F. H. Puckle, Secretary to Home Department, Government of India*, 3 February 1939, p. 1.

3 Quotation taken from Nilkan A. Perumal, *Rajaji*, p. 51.

4 *Kudi Arasu*, 7 January 1939; *Mail*, 1 January 1939.

5 NAI., *Home Department, Madras, Confidential Fortnightly Reports, D.O. No*. 4-12 *G. T. Boag, Chief Secretary, Fort St. George—J. A. Thorne, Home Department, New Delhi*, 6 July 1938. Quoted in Eugene F. Irschick's unpublished paper, 'Dravidianism in South Indian Politics', read at the svmposium held at the University of Texas at Austin on 5 December 1968.

reports about the inducements offered to the recruits were denied by any of the Self-Respecters whom the writer interviewed. However they pointed out that these allegations, though they did not contain the whole truth, did not minimize in any way the impression that the agitation left on the Tamils.[1]

As there was a modicum of truth in their contention, the Congressmen exploited the inducements given to the recruits at the initial stages of the agitation as a weapon to discredit the anti-Hindi movement. These denunciations, far from solving the issue constructively, aggravated communal bitterness and political hostility. Brahmans who were opposed to the compulsory introduction of Hindi in schools were embittered by the Congress Ministry's uncompromising attitude and appealed to Rajaji personally to repeal the order, not only in the interests of Hindi in the South but also in the larger interests of communal harmony in the Tamil society. One Brahman, who was highly critical of the government's stand on Hindi, said in his letter to the *Mail* that to call the anti-Hindi agitation, in which 'men of letters and leaders participated with genuine feeling of harm done to the country, a political stunt was a travesty of truth.'[2] Another Brahman wrote to the *Hindu* that the immediate need of the people was compulsory primary education in their own mother tongue rather than compulsory Hindi, which was nothing but a fad of the Congress ministry.[3] Still another leader urged that as the Brahman community was the target of attack because of the Hindi controversy it should with one voice compel the Premier either to abolish Hindi or to resign his office.[4]

The opposition of a section of Brahmans to compulsory Hindi was an added embarrassment to Rajaji's Ministry. This was further accentuated by the death of L. Natarajan, an anti-Hindi agitator, while serving seven months and a half rigorous imprisonment at the Madras penitentiary for having picketed before the Hindu Theological High School on 5 December 1938.[5] While in prison he developed acute stomach pain and swelling on the face and was admitted to the

1 Interview with Vedachalam on 27 July 1969.
2 *Mail*, 22 January, 1939.
3 *Hindu* n.d, quoted in the *Sunday Observer*, 15 January 1939.
4 *Mail*, 8 January 1939.
5 *Sunday Observer*, 22 January 1939.

General Hospital opposite the penitentiary for treatment on 30 December 1938. Within a fortnight Natarajan's condition deteriorated and on 15 January the following year he died at the hospital as a prisoner.[1] According to the medical report, read on the floor of the Madras Legislative Assembly on 18 January, Natarajan was given proper medical attention but died 'unfortunately of natural causes.'[2]

Notwithstanding this, the oppositionists both in and outside the assembly denounced the government on two counts. In the first place they charged the ministry with failure to release the prisoner unconditionally when his condition deteriorated. It was alleged that the officials before admitting Natarajan in the hospital had insisted on his tendering an apology for participating in the agitation so that he could be released forthwith. A letter addressed by Natarajan's father to the press, which was published in the *Sunday Observer* on 22 January 1939, lends support to this allegation. It was also stated by the anti-Hindi leaders that Natarajan neither wanted his release nor yielded to the pressure of the government officials to make an apology. Instead he seemed to have declared that he would rather 'die at the hospital as a hero than tender his apology as a coward.'[3] The leaders of the anti-Hindi movement cited this as an incontrovertible fact in their speeches and despised the 'inhuman attitude' in allowing the prisoner to die in the hospital.[4] Secondly, Rajaji's statement on the floor of the assembly was taken as a subject for bitter discussion by the Justicites at their meetings and was cited as an example of the government's wilful distortion of facts about the anti-Hindi movement. On 18 January, answering questions relating to Natarajan's death Rajaji made some 'uncharitable remarks' about the deceased Harijan youth and the anti-Hindi leaders.[5] According to the Premier, Natarajan picketed

---

1 *Sunday Observer*, 22 January 1939.

2 *MLAD*, Vol. IX (January, 1939), p. 654; M.R.O. *Home Department G.O. No*. 334, 21 February 1939.

3 M. Ilanceliyan *Tamilan Totutta Mutal Por*, p. 180; *Sunday Observer*, 12 February 1939; M.R.O. *Home Department, G.O. No*: 334, 21 February 1939.

4 *Kudi Arasu*, 18 March 1939.

5 *Sunday Observer*, 22 January 1939; M.R.O. *Home Department, G.O. No*. 334, 21 February 1939; *Justice*, 25 January 1939.

before the school because he was illiterate and widespread illiteracy among the Harijans was exploited by the opponents of Hindi to carry on their agitation. The opposition strongly protested against this statement, and Natarajan's father pointed out some inaccuracies in the Premier's statement made in the assembly.

> The Premier told the Assembly that my son (Natarajan) was temporarily released. This is incorrect. My son was guarded by the police throughout in the hospital. It is a pity that Mr. Achariar (Rajaji) should bluff the public by saying that (my son) (sic) was illiterate.[1]

Natarajan's death was fully exploited by Justicites to stir up popular feelings against the ministry.[2] To some extent they were successful, for this can be gauged by the number of public meetings held in his honour and the number of people who attended them. In January alone more than 150 meetings were held throughout Tamilnad and these were largely attended. In January at Kumbakonam over 10,000 people attended a meeting to mourn Natarajan's death, whereas a fortnight earlier an anti-Hindi meeting at the same place had attracted only 5,000 people.[3] The same was true in other centres. At Villupuram on 10 January 3,000 people had attended an anti-Hindi meeting, but this number trebled at the meeting held to mourn Natarajan's death ten days later.[4] These meetings were addressed by speakers, like C. N. Annadurai, who made full use of their oratorical skill to rouse public sympathy and win support for the anti-Hindi campaign and the Justice Party. One such speech is of special significance because it shows how the justicites exploited the death of an insignificant person to whip up popular discontent against the government. At the condolence meeting held at the burial grounds Annadurai made a moving speech in Tamil, full of pathos and dramatic sequence, which, according to the *Sunday Observer*, touched the 'very marrow' of the gathering. Annadurai concluded that 'memorable speech' thus:

1 *Sunday Observer*, 22 January 1939; *Justice*, 25 January 1939; M.R.O. *Home Department*, *G.O. No.* 334, 21 February 1939.

2 NAI., *Home. Political*, *File No.* 18/I/39, *Poll*, 1939, *D.O.* No. *P.* 4-2 Confidential Fortnightly Reports, from G.T. Boag, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to F. H. Puckle, Secretary to Home Department Government of India, 3 February 1939, p. I.

3 *Kudi Arasu*, 21 and 7 January 1939.

4 Ibid., 28 and 14 January 1939.

> Yonder lies Natarajan, .. his heart ceased to beat, his blood ceased to circulate, and his hair standing on its end. But, look at the face alone. Does it not indicate that he died while fighting in the battle, for his independence and culture? All those of you who have mustered in your thousands, should make a promise that you would follow the inspiring example of Mr. Natarajan, who alas, is no more with us, to participate in the fight against an unwanted language .. If anyone were to ask you hereafter whether the introduction of Hindi will impair the growth of the Tamil language, your answer shall be 'Hindi has come, and a Tamilian died, died while attempting to prevent it.'[1]

In addition meetings to celebrate the day on which Naicker was imprisoned were convened. With these meetings the Justicites attempted to turn the public against the Congress Government.

In the first week of February news about Naicker's illness caused grave concern among the Justicites. On 13 February the Virudhunagar anti-Hindi committee, in conjunction with the local branch of the Justice Party, held a big protest meeting urging the cancellation of compulsory Hindi and the release of Naicker in view of his 'precarious health'. Telegrams containing the same appeal were sent to Subhas Chandra Bose, the then president of the Indian National Congress, to the Prime Minister and the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras.[2] The citizens of Madras held a similar meeting on 17 February and passed a resolution appealing for Naicker's immediate discharge from prison.[3] The members of the Women's Association of Madras threatened that unless Naicker was set free before 25 February they would offer a satyagraha in front of the Premier's residence.[4] Participants at meetings threatened to resort to satyagraha, direct action and fasting. The available data indicate that in the month of February alone over 200 meetings, big and small, were held all over the Tamil districts.[5]

---

1 *Sunday Observer*, 22 January 1939.

2 *Mail*, 14 February 1939.

3 *Mail*, 18 February 1939.

4 Ibid.

5 *Kudi Arasu*, 18 and 25 February and 4 March 1939.

The mounting demand for the immediate release of Naicker put the government in a dilemma. A large number of Congress M.L.As. seem to have reasoned that his release would allay the ministry's concern about his health, that it would mollify feelings created against the government on account of Natarajan's death, and that more immediately the police department would be relieved of its pressing duty to prevent the Justicites from besieging the penitentiary every day. Some others, while theoretically agreeing with their arguments, contended that for a popular government to yield to the 'pressure tactics' of the oppositionists could be construed as weakness. Others suggested that to relieve the strain on the city police, Naicker should be transferred from the Madras penitentiary to a prison in the Telugu districts.[1]

The last suggestion seems to have received overwhelming support from the members of the Congress Council Party. As the Cabinet members were also favourable to it, Naicker was transferred without any publicity to the Bellary central jail on 17 February 1939. The news was carried by the city newspapers the following day.[2]

The Justicites, who had been hoping for Naicker's release, received the news with surprise and consternation. Amid vexed feelings two of Naicker's trusted colleagues in the Justice Party, Soundrapandiyan and Viswanathan, left for Bellary during the last week of February to obtain first hand information about Naicker's health. He was then suffering from persistent stomach pain, which was at times very acute. Despite good medical attention and the best available food, signs of improvement were absent,[3] and the oppressive heat at Bellary contributed to the deterioration of his condition. Besides, the doctors at the jail failed to make a correct diagnosis of the cause of the intermittently acute stomach pain. Soundrapandiyan and Viswanathan returned to Madras in the first week of March and acquainted their colleagues with Naicker's state of health.

1 Interview with a leading Congressman on 15 September 1939. He wishes to remain anonymous for some years.

2 *Mail*, *Hindu* and *Swadesamitran*, 18 January 1939.

3 According to Naicker's own version, the Jail authorities were uniformly kind and courteous to him and the food served to him was good, although it did not agree with him, *Mail*, 29 May 1939.

While Naicker's health was causing some concern among the Justicites, they received the news of the death of Thalamuthu Nadar, one of the anti-Hindi campaigners who had been in prison since 13 February for picketing before the Hindu Theological High School. When he entered prison he was said to have been in good health, but after three weeks of confinement he developed acute stomach pain and was admitted to the penitentiary hospital on 6 March. His condition progressively deteriorated. It took a turn for the worse on 10 March and he died the following day at the general hospital.[1]

Thalamuthu Nadar's death put the Congress circles in a flutter, as it happened only eight weeks after Natarajan's death in almost identical circumstances. Though the medical reports attributed different reasons to the death of the two men, the fact that these diseases involved acute stomach disorder caused strong suspicion among the politicians and the general public that the agitators had contracted them inside the prison. They suspected that absence of hygienic conditions and other facilities at the penitentiary was the reason for these 'unfortunate deaths.' Though these speculations were to some extent silenced by the report of the Director of Publich Health,[2] the Justicites raised a hue and cry over Thalamuthu's death and asked for a full report of the circumstances under which he died. Questions were raised on this subject in the Assembly in May 1939, and Rajaji explained the nature of the treatment given to the prisoner from the first symptoms of the disease until his death. To support his claim the

---

1 *MLAD*, Vol. XII (May, 1939), p. 513.

2 The Director of Public Health, who visited the penitentiary was of the opinion that 'nothing was wrong from the sanitary point of view'. The latrines, the kitchen, the food and the facilities in the prison hospital were reported to be 'satisfactory'. *MLAD*, Vol. XII, p. 513. But according to Naicker medical facilities were bad in the prison. To put it in his own words, 'if a sick man took six months to die outside prison, he would die in prison in one month'. *Mail*, 19 April 1939.

medical report was read *verbatim et litteratim* on the floor of the House.[1]

Despite the efforts to convince the opposition, Thalamuthu's death afforded an excellent opportunity for the Justicites to pose some embarrassing questions to discredit the ministry. As this was the second death in two months, they asked why the ministry had failed to set Thalamuthu free even when his condition deteriorated, and why it had compelled him to tender a written apology as a pre-condition for his release. The same questions were posed by some Congressmen in their caucus meetings, but the ministry refused to be drawn into a debate on this matter and maintained silence.[2] This was explained by its determination to strike terror into the anti-Hindi campaigners. Some extremists in the Congress even felt that the stiff attitude was understandable in view of the methods adopted by the agitators to coerce a popular government. The Congress conference which was held at Lalapuram in Virudhunagar endorsed the stand on anti-Hindi agitators and called upon the ministry to take 'drastic steps' to put an end to the agitations.[3]

On the strength ofthis the ministry refused to consider Naicker's release despite his deteriorating health. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar, in an editorial in *Navasakti* of 24 March, cautioned the ministry against the dangers of confining Naicker in prison any longer and hoped that it would heed his warning, given in good faith.[4] In the meantime, in March 1939, the Justicites filed an appeal on behalf of Naicker before the Fourth Presidency Magistrate for getting his conviction quashed. This time the case was heard

---

1 'I have the honour to report that the deceased person's illness was amoebic dysentery. The incubation period, that is the period between infection and the appearance of symptoms, is from three weeks to three months. He was admitted on the evening of 13 February and the symptoms appeared on 4 March 1939, taking his own statement that he had some motions a day or two before he reported about the motions. The period was only eighteen days, that is less than the minimum period of incubation for this disease. The fact that there has not been a single case of amoebic dysentery during the last four months shows that the infection was not from the jail food or water'. *MLAD*, Vol. XI (March, 1939), p. 517.

2 Interview with a leading Congressman on 15 September 1969. He wishes to remain anonymous for some years.

3 *Mail*, 12 April 1939.

4 *Navasakti*, 24 March 1939.

by two English judges and they dismissed the appeal on the ground that Naicker's speeches did contain direct incitement to commit offence, and confirmed the original sentence passed in March 1939.[1] Nevertheless the government was prepared to show special consideration to Naicker if he had any personal preferences for doctors or comforts in jail, in view of his health and age. In the first week of April he made an informal request through the officials in Bellary jail that he should be examined by Dr. M. R. Guruswami Mudaliar, a leading Madras physician.[2] Accordingly Dr. Mudaliar was deputed by the government to proceed to Bellary and examine Naicker. After a thorough check-up Mudaliar advised the ministry to fit Naicker with a new abdominal belt in order to relieve his intermittent pains in the stomach, and to have him transferred during the summer season to a cooler place.[3] The ministry paid heed to Mudaliar's advice and in April Naicker was transferred without delay to Coimbatore central jail. Even then there was no improvement in his health and he continued to experience acute stomach pain and suffer from diarrhoea after breakfast. He had by then lost 23 lbs of his original weight of 190 lbs.[4] In May, when his condition was serious the superintendent of the Coimbatore jail went to Ootacamund and apprised the authorities of his failing health. By then agitations were further intensified for his release. The Congressmen themselves increasingly voiced opposition and the M.L.A.'s expressed deep concern over Naicker's health. In the circumstances the ministry could not but release Naicker from jail without pre-conditions on 22 May 1939.[5]

The Justicites viewed Naicker's unconditional release as a change of heart on the part of the ministry. As if to confirm their

1 In the first instance Naicker was tried by a Brahman Magistrate, although this was a coincidence. *Mail*, 26 November 1938 and 31 March 1939; M.R.O. *Public G.O. No.* 241, 3 February 1939.

2 Interview with Balasubramaniam on 28 July 1969; *MLAD*, Vol. XII p. 711.

3 *MLAD*, Vol. XII, p. 710.

4 Sami Chidambaranar, *Tamilar Talaivar*, p. 199; *Mail*, 29 May 1939.

5 Interview with Ramasami Naicker on 1 June 1969; *Mail* 29 May 1939; Sami Chidambaranar *Tamilar Talaivar*, p. 199; T. M. Parthasarathi *D.M.K. Varalaru* (History of the D.M.K.), (Madras, 1961), p. 30.

view, it also released all the anti-Hindi prisoners before the expiry of their period of conviction in the first week of June.[1] At the same time, Rajaji assured Samiappa Mudaliar in the legislative council that the government would consider abolishing the scheme of teaching Hindi in schools.[2] On 18 June, when a women's delegation led by Dharmambal met the Premier, he once again asserted that 'no compulsion' was attached to the teaching of Hindi.[3] Despite these assurances and conciliatory moves, the government was not prepared to take any step to remove the element of compulsion. Instead there was a rumour afloat that Hindi would be compulsorily taught in a hundred other schools throughout the presidency.

Ramasami Naicker, who was quiet for a couple of days after his release, came out against the language policy and some of the new taxes designed to compensate for the loss of revenue sustained by prohibiting the making or sale of alcoholic drinks in four districts. In October 1937 prohibition was first introduced in Salem, the home district of Rajaji. Prohibition was one of the important planks of the constructive programme of the Congress. Rajaji himself was a leading protagonist of the temperance movement. He had been the general secretary of the Prohibition League and had done considerable spade work for over a quarter of a century at Salem against the evil of liquor drinking.[4] As he had constantly before his mind the picture of a drunkard's family brought down by the self-indulgence of the head, Rajaji introduced prohibition on an experimental basis firstly in his own district on becoming the Chief minister.[5] Then, in October of the following, year, Chittor and Cuddapah went 'dry'. In the subsequent year North Arcot followed suit, thus forming a 'dry area' in the presidency. As a result of extending prohibition from one to four districts the loss of excise revenue in one financial year from

1 *Mail*, 5 June 1939; *Kudi Arasu*, 10 June 1939.

2 *Mail*, 20 June 1939; *Kudi Arasu*, 17 June 1939.

3 *Kudi Arasu*, 24 June 1939; *Mail*, 20 June 1939.

4 S. Natarajan, *A Century of Social Reform in India* (London, 1959), pp. 165-166 and 169.

5 *NMML, Jawaharlal Nehru's Correspondence*, 1937-39, *File No. PL*-3/1937, Pt. II, pp. 225-257. Government of Madras, Ministry of Public Information, P.C. No. 22/38, dated 7 May 1938; NMML., *Madras Legislative Reports*, File No. PL-3/1938, pp. 81-85.

1 April to 31 March amounted to 65 lakhs as shown in the table (Table VII) on the following page. As prohibition was introduced in stages in the second half of each financial year from 1 October to 31 March, the cumulative

TABLE VII

The loss of excise revenue in one fiscal year due to the introduction of prohibition in four districts.

		lakhs
1.	Salem District ..	26.00
2.	Chittoor District ..	9.00
3.	Cuddappah District ..	7.00
4.	North Arcot District ..	23.00
	Total ..	65.00

Source : B. V. Narayanaswamy Naidu, *Madras Finance*, p. 55

loss of revenue as a result of prohibition policy was also gradual, as shown by the following Table:

TABLE VIII

The loss of revenue due to prohibition policy 1937-1940
(In lakhs of rupees)

Year	Total revenues	Total expenditure on revenue account	Surplus or deficit	Loss of excise revenue	Percentage of loss to total revenue
1937-38	1600.62	1582.96	+17.66	13	0.84
1938-39	1613.45	1609.72	+ 3.73	34	2.12
1939-40	1665.90	1637.39	+28.57	53½	3.22

Source: B. V. Narayanaswamy Naidu, *Madras Finance*, p. 55.

The percentage of loss to total revenue in the fiscal year of 1937-38 was 0.84 but this went up to 3.22 in 1939-40.

To make good this loss of excise revenue, the Finance Minister, who was the Prime Minister himself imposed no less than five new taxes and improved the yield of two taxes already in force. In February 1939 the Madras Electricity Duty Bill and the Madras Sales of Motor Spirit Taxation Bill were introduced in the assembly and passed. The first one provided for a levy on the sale of electricity at a price of more than 2 annas a unit. The tax was primarily payable by the licensee, but the government might permit the licensee to reimburse himself from the consumer. The second one provided for a levy of a tax on petrol at one anna six pies per gallon and on classes of motor fuel other than petrol at 6 pies per gallon.[1] In the subsequent month the Government Sales Tax Bill came and it aroused a great deal of criticism.[2] The Entertainment Tax Bill was also introduced during the same month. The object of the Bill was to provide for the levy of a provincial tax on amusements and other entertainments instead of the taxes imposed by local bodies.[3] Other two new Acts were the Sale of Cloth Act and the Tobacco Tax Act. The terms and conditions of the Betting Tax were revised in order to yield more revenue. Through these Acts the government derived a cumulative revenue of 79.34 lakhs of rupees in the fiscal year 1939-40.

1 NAI., *Home, Political, File No.* 18/2/39, *Poll*, 1939, *D.O. No. P.* 4-4 *Confidential Fortnightly Reports, from G.T. Boag, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to F. H. Puckle, Secretary to Home Department, Government of India*, 4 March 1939, p. I.

2 NAI., *Home, Political, File No.*, 18/3/39, *Poll.* 1939, *D.O. No. P.* 4-5 *Confidential Fortnightly Reports, from G. T. Boag, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to F. H. Puckle, Secretary to Home Department, Government of India*, 18 March 1939.

3 NAI., *Home, Political, File No.* 18/3/39, *Poll*, 1939, *D.O. No. P.* 4-6, *Confidential Fortnightly Reports from G. T. Boag, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to F. H. Puckle. Secretary to Home Department, Government of India*, 4 April 1939, p. I.

Table IX

The cumulative revenue derived from the new taxes in the fiscal years, 1937-40.

Taxes	1937-38	1938-39	1939-40
Entertainment Tax	..	..	8.13
Betting Tax	1.49	1.33	1.66
Electricity Duty	0.49	0.60	5.62
Sale of Cloth Act	0.90	1.28	1.14
Motor Spirit Act	..	..	15.77
Tobacco Act	..	..	13.03
General Sales-Tax	..	..	33.99
Old enhanced taxes and new taxes	2.88	3.21	79.34

Source: B. V. Narayanaswamy Naidu, *Madras Finance*, p. 57.

The revenue from the motor spirit, tobacco and general sales taxes only amounted to 62.79 lakhs out of the total revenue of 79.34 derived from the new source. Nearly less than half of this was obtained solely from the general sales tax.

All these taxes were opposed to the pledges given by the Congressmen in the 1937 election campaign for they had promised substantial reduction in land revenue and other taxes. Newspapers opposed to the Congress objected strongly to the additional taxation and considered that they could have been avoided but for prohibition.[1] In particular a section of the mercantile community opposed the Sales Tax Bill with vigour. Hartals and meetings were organized by shopkeepers to protest, mainly in Tamil districts.[2] The Indian Chamber of Commerce itself orga-

1 NAI., *Home, Political, File No.* 18/2/39, *Poll,* 1939, *D. O. No.* p. 4-4, *Confidential Fortnightly Reports from G.T. Boag, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to F. H. Puckle, Secretary to Home Department, Government of India,* 4 March 1939, p. I.

2 NAI., *Home, Political, File No.* 18/3/39, *Poll.* 1939, *D.O. No.* p. 4-6, *Confidential Fortnightly Reports from G. T. Boag, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to F. H. Puckle, Secretary to Home Department, Government of India,* 18 March 1939, p. I.

nized a mammoth protest meeting in Madras on 18 March 1939.[1] voicing apprehensions about loss of profits as a result of the General Sales Tax. The tobacco merchants, apart from voicing their opposition to the sales tax condemned the tobacco tax as one calculated 'to crush a thriving business.'[2] The public on the other hand were displeased at the prospect of paying more for public transport charges and for entertainments in view of the tax on petrol and the increase in the entertainments tax.[3]

Ramasami Naicker saw the taxation policy of the Rajaji ministry not as an effort to balance the budget but as a ruse of a 'political Brahman in power' to crush the economic prosperity of the non-Brahman communities. Looked at superficially, these new taxes left the professional classes, composed principally of Brahmans, untouched, whereas the business communities, consisting primarily of non-Brahmans, were 'gravely affected'. Although the business communities would pass the taxes on to the buyers irrespective of communal considerations, Naicker and his colleagues created the impression that the ministry was mainly concerned with promoting the interests of the professional class of Brahmans. Naicker's arguments were expounded at a public meeting on 20 June, 1939;

> The financial policy of the Rajaji ministry bears more hard upon non-Brahmans than Brahman communities. The Premier may claim this is entirely fortuitous and assert that it is not intended in the least. Taking this as fortuitous why should not the government consider my suggestions of taxing the professional earnings of doctors, lawyers and engineers? Why should not the owners of big coffee clubs scattered throughout the Presidency be taxed ? Neither the government nor Rajaji would think or move on these lines because these professions and businesses were largely in the hands of Brahmans......

1 NAI., *Home, Political, File No.* 18/3/39, *Poll,* 1939, *D.O. No. p.* 4-6, *Confidential Fortnightly Reports from G. T. Boag, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to F. H. Puckle, Secretary to Home Department, Government of India.* 4 April 1939, p. I.

2 Nilkan A. Perumal, *Rajaji*, p.50.

3 *Mail*, 25 May 1939; *Swadesamitran*, 22 May 1939; *Kudi Arasu*, 3 June 1939.

> We invested the *purohitas* (meaning Rajaji) with ruling powers and now suffer for it.[1*]

One would have expected Naicker to welcome prohibition because of his interest in the aims of the temperence movement. But he neither welcomed this piece of social legislation nor was appreciative of it. Instead he not merely opposed the new taxes introduced mainly to compensate for financial loss, but also imputed communal motives to their promulgation. Although there was no basis for such criticisms, they reveal Naicker's blind opposition to Congress.

Naicker not only condemned the fiscal policy of Rajaji ministry but also its growing tendency to appoint more Brahmans than non-Brahmans in the public services. To show that the minority Brahman community was holding over 50 per cent of positions in the services statistics were collected from government departments regarding the Brahman numerical strength in them. Since the Congress Ministry came to power statistics about the number of positions held by them in quasi-government organizations were also prepared and published in *Kudi Arasu* and the *Sunday Observer.*[2] The following three Tables X, XI, and XII, taken from these two newspapers indicating the number of positions held by the Brahman community in the Civil Services, the Judiciary and the Electricity Department of Madras Province:

1* *Kudi Arasu*, 22 June 1939.

2 Since 1938 these two newspapers had published a number of tables showing the relative positions of Brahmans and non-Brahmans in the various public services. For example on 3 September 1939 *Kudi Arasu* published a list of Brahman officials in the Madras Provincial Co-operative Bank Ltd., and claimed that out of 52 officials only ten were non-Brahmans and they too were holding ordinary positions with a salary of 50 rupees, or less per month.

TABLE X

The distribution of posts in the Indian Civil Service among the various castes and communities of the Madras Presidency in 1939.

1.	Europeans	80
2.	Brahmans	45
3.	Malayalis	14
4.	Muslims	7
5.	Christians	7
6.	Ceylonese	1
7.	Tamils and Telugus	4

Source: *Kudi Arasu*, 20 August 1939.

TABLE XI

Consolidated statement of the staff of the Government Electricity Department according to community

	Strength	Brahmins	Non Brahmins	Christians	Muslims	Scheduled Classes	Anglo-Indians
Divisional Engineers	14	9	4	..	..	..	1
Assistant Engineers	38	31	3	1	..	..	3
Chief Accountants	2	2	..	..	..	..	..
Junior Engineers	60	38	17	3	1	..	1
Supervisors 1st grade	37	15	17	..	3	1	1
Supervisors 2nd grade	54	32	10	10	1	..	1
Manager, Accountants and Head Clerks	26	21	5	..	..	..	..
Upper Division Clerks	41	26	13	2	..	..	..
Lower Division Clerks	126	52	50	15	8	1	..
Typists	29	26	3	..	..	..	..
Attenders	8	4	3	..	..	1	..
Store-keepers	11	6	2	2	..	..	1
Draftsmen	24	17	6	1	..	..	..
Bill Collectors	12	9	2	..	1	..	..
Tracers	10	3	6	1	..	..	..
Total	492	291	141	35	14	3	8

Source: *Kudi Arasu*, 20 August 1939.

TABLE XII

Consolidated statement of the staff of the Judiciary according to community

Types of officers	Europeans	Brahmans	Malayalees	Muslims	Christians	Tamils and Telugus	Total Number
High Court Judges	7	5	..	1	..	1	14
High Court Officers	..	5	1	..	..	1	7
Law Officers	..	6	..	..	..	2	8
Small Court Judges	..	2	1	1	..	..	4
District Judges	5	20	1	3	1	2	32
Sub-Judges	..	41	5	3	..	9	58
District Munsifs	3	82	12	7	5	33	142

Source: *Kudi Arasu*, 27 August 1939.

According to Tables, X, XI and XII the Brahmans held over 57 per cent of jobs in the Civil and the Judicial Services and about 60 per cent in the Electricity Department. However nothing was there to indicate that these appointments were made after the advent of Rajaji's ministry. Again it had no hand in recruiting Indians to the Civil Services as this was done on the basis of a competitive examination. Neither Naicker nor his colleagues revealed these facts to the public. Also they were not concerned whether the positions listed in the Tables were offered before or after Rajaji formed the ministry. As members of the opposition party, their purpose ostensibly was to convince non-Brahman masses that the Congress ministry was headed and run by a Brahman and functioned for the benefit of the Brahman community.

The Congress government provided an excellent opportunity to strengthen Naicker's allegations when in 1939 it published the Administration Report for the official year ending 31 March 1938. In it details regarding appointments made for the various categories of vacant positions during that year were given in Table XIII.

TABLE XIII

Appointments made in the Madras public service up to 31 *March* 1938

Name of the cadre and the salary scale	No. of vacant positions	No. of Brahmans appointed	No. of Non-Brahmans Muslims and Christians appointed
1. Gazetted officers with a salary scale from 300 to 5,000 rupees	1,007	609	398
2. Non-Gazetted officers with a salary scale from 100 to 300 rupees	6,159	3,667	2,492
3. Clerks with a salary scale from 35 to 100 rupees	17,225	9,183	8,042
4. Peons and others with a salary of 35 rupees and less	35,175	1,513	33,662

Source: *Mail,* 21 August 1939.

Table XIII shows that over 60 per cent of the appointments to Gazetted positions were made from the Brahman community and the rest from among the non-Brahmans including caste Hindus, scheduled castes, Christians and Muslims. The position was no different in the next two categories either, with the Brahmans holding over 54 per cent of the available positions, while over 95 per cent of all vacancies in the lower categories, where the remuneration was 35 rupees or less per month were filled by non-Brahmans.

Even here it is not made clear how many were directly recruited and how many were promoted from the ranks. However it would be safe to assume that clerks and others for the lower cadres were directly recruited. But for the non-Gazetted and Gazetted ranks at least half of the vacancies would have been filled by promotions.

Such promotions would have been based largely on seniority, efficiency and general educational qaulifications. If these were the criteria adopted, then most of the personnel chosen for promotion would have been Brahmans, for they were the first to exploit the public services in the Madras Presidency. Therefore when promotions were considered many Brahmans by virtue of seniority and merit would in any case have got into the non-Gazetted and Gazetted positions. In the case of direct recruitments, the government may have ignored the terms of the Communal G. O. and enforced qualification as the basis for selection. In making appointment in technical services the Communal G. O. was not applied, as it was essential that the best qualified men alone should be appointed irrespective of communal considerations.[1] But in all other cases the Rajaji ministry followed the policy of the previous governments in the matter of communal representation in services.[2] To a certain extent this would have helped the progressive communities, chiefly Brahmans, to the chagrin of a segment of non-Brahmans who might have charged the government with showing undue preference to Brahmans. To put it in the words of the *Mail*:

> It is possible that the Government have not done so much as they might have done to make it easy for non-Brahmans to enter the services by meticulous insistence upon qualifications and rules. This has gradually developed among non-Brahmans the conviction that the Government are indifferent to their claims and are more concerned with satisfying those of their more vocal supporters, drawn mainly from the Brahman community.[3]

However, as there is no possibility of checking either the total number or the relative merits of Brahmans and non-Brahmans who had applied for the direct recruitments for various cadres, it is difficult to ascertain the truth about the rival claims of the Justicites and the members of the Rajaji ministry. The Justicites often maintained that the Communal G. O. was not strictly followed for recruitments to government services by the Rajaji ministry. On the

1 M.R.O., *Public, Services, G.O. No.* 1117, 30 June 1938.

2 M.R.O., *Public, Services, G.O. No.* 2215, 18 November 1937; G.O. No. 1462, 8 September 1939.

3 *Mail*, 11 October 1939.

other hand, the Congressmen refuted this allegation as a fabrication.[1] At the Seventh Gobichettipalayam Congress Conference held at Kongarapalayam on 21 August 1939 Rajaji, for example, not only rejected the Justicites' charge that the Communal G. O. was not strictly followed under the Congress Ministry but asserted that it was 'carefully followed', and as a result some Brahmans were disappointed with the Congress Government as, after its advent, they were not given 'sufficient representation.'[2]

Naicker was not convinced by the protestations of the ministry, nor were its professions believed by a large majority of the Justicites. To add to their dissatisfaction, the ministry intensified its repression of the anti-Hindi campaigners. By March 1939, the figures for arrests and convictions in Madras city in connection with the anti-Hindi agitation were 883 and 863 respectively.[3] On 17 July 1939 alone 13 persons including eight women were arrested for picketing before the Hindu Theological High School. All the accused were produced before L. R. Venkatarama Ayyar, Second Presidency Magistrate, Georgetown, and the five men were sentenced to a period of six months rigorous imprisonment. In the case of the women, who in earlier trials had been sentennced to terms of six weeks simple imprisonment, the term was increased to six months. As the women agitators were on the increase, the government gave harsher punishment in order to deter then from participating in the anti-Hindi movement.[4] Still on ever increasing number of women took to picketing. The government then took more drastic measures to quell the anti-Hindi movement. On 3 August, the police raided the house of Dr. Dharmambal in Mint Street, forced open a room and confiscated all the files relating to the anti-Hindi agitation: and Swami Shanmugananda, a leader of the anti-Hind movement, was arrested for organizing the picketing before the shool. About the same time, the police raided the anti-Hindi headquarters in Peddunaickenpet, and *Viduthalai* and

---

1 M.R.O., *Public, Services, G.O.* 1462, 6 September 1939.

2 *Hindu*, 22 August 1939; *Swadesamitran*, and *Mail*, 21 August 1939.

3 NAI., *Home, Political, File No.* 18/3/39 *Poll*, 1939, *D.O. No. P.* 4-6, *Confidential Fortnightly Reports from G. T. Boag, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to F. H. Puckle, Secretary to Home Department Government of India*, 4 April 1939.

4 *Kudi Arasu*, 22 July 1939; *Mail*, 17 July 1939.

Kudi Arasu offices and took possession of some of the back issues, letters and files concerning the anti-Hindi campaign.[1]

Although the steps taken by the police were within the bounds of the ordinary law, to the Justicites it was an 'extraordinary, unusual and unwarranted step' aimed at suppressing the freedom of the press. This was felt particularly in the case of newspapers which consistently opposed the policies of the government. Muthiah Chettiar, the leader of the Council Justice Party, also felt that this raid was made to silence the opposition. Consequently, in the first week of August, he sought the permission of the Speaker to move an adjournment motion on the police raids. But he was not given an opportunity to explain fully the reasons for moving it. Every time he began to develop his argument either the Premier or the Speaker intervened and asked Chettiar whether there was anything that was done outside the law. The Premier maintained

> .. it is utter violation of all administrative procedure if every normal activity of the administration has to become the subject matter of discussion on the floor of this House, and all officers will be under intimidation if we begin to discuss things like this.[2]

The speaker said that if there had been any shooting and lathi charges he would consider allowing an adjournment motion. As no such thing had happened and according to the ministry there had been no departure from normal administration of the law, the Speaker disallowed the motion.[3] This rejection without proper debate reflected on the prestige of the government and weakened its case for authorizing the police to raid the newspaper offices. But, it strengthened the argument of the Justicites that at the provincial level the Congress flouted the interests of non-Brahmans for the benefit of Brahmans and at the national level it sacrificed the cultural interests of the Tamils at the altar of Indian nationalism.

With this firmly-held view the members of the executive committee of the Justice Party met at the residence of Naicker in Erode on 11 August 1939. Being the first meeting since Naicker became the leader, much importance was attached to its proceedings as it

---

1 *Kudi Arasu*, 5 August, 1939; *Mail*, 3 August 1939

2 *MLAD.*, Vol. XIII (August, 1939), p. 258.

3 Ibid., p. 256.

would be a pointer to the future programme. As expected, the implications of the fiscal and language policies were thoroughly considered. Various views were put forth on the means to set right the damage done to the interests of non-Brahmans in general and to the cause of Tamil in particular. Many agreed that the best way to protect economic and cultural interests of the Tamils was to establish an independent Tamil country. As a first step to realize this aim the members of the executive committee unanimously decided to 'work for the overthrow of the Congress Ministry.'[1] However they failed to elaborate how they would go about this impracticable objective, especially when the Congress was assured of an elephantine majority in the assembly. Naturally this precluded the constitutional method, and Naicker was opposed to violence at this stage. The only alternative left to them was to direct the growing discontent with the policies of the Congress Ministry so as to start a countrywide agitation and force it to resign.

Though nothing was spelt out regarding the course of action that the Justicites were to pursue to overthrow the government, Naicker's speeches soon after the executive committee meeting indicated that he was bent upon mobilizing the forces opposed to the Congress under the Justice flag. His appeal was directed firstly to the business community, which with one voice totally opposed the General Sales Tax Act of 1939.[2] The Act authorized the levy of a general tax on the sale of goods other than those that came under the Abkari Act of 1886 or the Opium Act of 1878.[3] The tax, which was calculated on the turnover of business, exempted merchants with less than 10,000 rupees annual turnover. Those with less than 20,000 rupees annual turnover were charged at the rate of five rupees per mensem and one and a half per cent on turnovers exceeding 20,000 rupees.[4] As many businessmen were

1 *Mail*, 12 August 1939; *Kudi Arasu*, 19 August 1939.

2 Nilkan A. Perumal, Rajaji, p. 50; NAI, *Home, Political, File No.* 18/3/39, *Poll*, 1939, *D.O. No.* p. 4-5., *Confidential Fortnightly Reports from G. T. Boag, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, to F. H. Puckle, Secretary to Home Department, Government of India*, 18 *March* 1939, *pp.* 1-4; *Ibid., D.O. No., p.* 4-6. 4 April 1939, p. 1.

3 According to the Abkari and Opium Acts, items like electrical energy, motor spirit and manufactured tobacco were exempted.

4 B. V. Narayanaswami Naidu, *Madras Finance*, p. 67.

opposed to the tax, Naicker at a public meeting in Trichinopoly urged them to agitate for its withdrawal soon or else it would become an accomplished fact detrimental to the entire business community. Furthermore he prophesided:

> .. many merchants will be ruined when the time came for paying the sales tax at the end of the year. If the merchants want salvation they must withdraw the support they have been giving to the Congress. Otherwise they will be ruined, for no one knows how many more taxes are in store for them.[1*]

Naicker's next focus of attention was the Brahman community itself, because two powerful groups, the Smartas and the Sanathanists were opposed, if not to the Congress as a whole, at least to Rajaji and certain policies pursued by him. The members of the former group, despite their firm support to the Congress, did not agree with Rajaji when he tried to keep Satyamurti out of the Madras legislature and then the ministry. They expected Satyamurti to contest the 1937 elections from the University Graduates' constituency which he had represented before. But before he could decide on it K. Srinivasan of the *Hindu* persuaded him to continue in the central assembly with an assurance that when the Congress formed the ministry he would be included in it. Ultimately this safe constituency, with a large number of Brahman electors, was allotted to Rajaji himself. But when the ministry was formed neither the assurance of Srinivasan nor the personal pledge of Rajaji was kept. Though many reasons were advanced for his exclusion,[2] some Smartas believed that this was done by Rajaji in order to include T. S. S. Rajan in the ministry.

On the other hand the Sanatanists were opposed to the Congress Ministry because of its liberalizing policies, which they considered contrary to the basic concepts of Hinduism. The chief among these measures was the Temple Entry Bill, which made it possible for

---

1* *Kudi Arasu*, 19 August 1939.

2 Dwelling on this point, V. K. Narasimhan, in his book *Kamaraj: A Study*, observes that, apart from the 'sharp clash of personalities, Rajaji might not have found Satyamurthi a docile and accomodating member of his Ministry.' Over this issue a section of non-Brahmans in the Congress were also dissatisfied with Rajaji. V. K. Narasimhan, *Kamaraj: A Study* (Bombay, 1967), pp. 21-22.

Harijans in the Malabar districts to enter and worship in the temples. The original temple entry bill which Rajaji had helped M. C. Raja to draft had been abandoned and the new one to open temples in Malabar was taken up on the plea that the ground had been prepared by the Travancore Temple Entry Proclamation.[1] The new measure was more moderate than the original one. Rajaji expected stiff opposition even for this bill from orthodox quarters. His letter to the general secretary of the AICC brings out this fear.

> It was very good of the Working Committee to take notice of our efforts in regard to temple entry. I wish we had only sanatanists to deal with. Our lawyer Liberal friends are a great trouble. There is a very determined effort to produce a situation mixed up with physical rowdyism, that being our weak point for attack.[2]

An anticipated by Rajaji, the orthodox elements did put up a fight for the withdrawal of the Temple Entry Act. Appeals were made to the president of the AICC to safeguard the religious practices and customs of the minorities. They also wrote to Rajaji about the strong opposition to the Temple Entry Proclamation and urged him to repeal it forthwith. To this Rajaji wrote :

> I still consider that the Travancore Temple Entry Proclamation is a good and noble act and will serve Hinduism as nothing else has done in modern times... the contribution that Hindus should make to politics is inextricably mixed with their attitude towards a better ordering of Hindu society.[3]

He further made it clear to Sanatanists that Congress would go ahead with its programme of removing untouchability in all spheres of activity in spite of opposition.[4] As a result of this curt reply the Sanatanists started agitations against Harijan entry

---

1 S. Natarajan, *A Century of Social Reform in India*, p. 173.

2 NMML., *Rajaji's letter to J. B. Kripalani, General Secretary of AICC, 16 August* 1939, *File No. PL*-3, 1939, p. 1.

3 NMML., *Rajaji's reply to T. S. Ramaswamy Iyer, Secretary of the Madras Provincial Varnashrama Swarajya Sanga, Madras,* 3 *May* 1937, *File No.* PL-3, 1937, p. 2.

4 There was a protracted correspondence between Rajaji and the secretary of the Varnashrama Sanga for over two months. See NMML, *File No.* PL-3. 1937, pp. 1-8.

into Hindu temples. They argued that their 'dharmic scruples' should be respected by Congress if it wanted their support.

In the face of Sanatanist opposition to temple entry bill one would have expected Naicker to support Rajaji's efforts to bring about a social change in the Tamil society. Instead he was quite willing to compromise his own cherished and much advocated social aims like the uplift of Harijans and accommodate the Sanatanists' views for immediate political gains. He sought only alliance with anyone opposed to Congress with the sole purpose of making Congress unpopular. In pursuit of this policy, he made an impassioned appeal to the discontended factions in Brahman community to join the Justice Party. His speeches, throughout August and September became extremely temperate compromising, pursuasive and even patronizing. Addressing a mammoth political meeting at the Triplicane beach on 21 August 1939 Naicker digressed from the main theme and explained to Brahmans that he had no caste considerations and that he had no personal hatred against them. However, he said that he was against the 'atrocities of political Brahmans' and was opposed only to Brahman pretensions to superiority. Furthermore he maintained that Brahmans would not be chased out of the country, nor would he advocate this as a policy of the Justice Party. Brahmans and non-Brahmans should live like brothers peacefully and happily, each recognizing the legitimate rights of the other in public life. To the Sanathanists he said that, in their 'unfounded suspicion of the Justicites', they should not support the 'political Brahmans' without any convictions other than caste. The Sanatanists' continued support, he maintained, would only imperil their cause, for the political Brahmans had not learnt to respect the scruples of others. A week later he appealed to Brahmans who stood for the progress of the country to join the Justice movement.[1]

How far Naicker would have succeeded in winning Brahmans and business community over to his side is a matter of speculation. Before anything tangible could happen in the politics of the province the political situation in the country took an unexpected turn owing to the outbreak of the Second World War in September

1 *Kudi Arasu*, 27 August and 3 September 1939; *Mail*, 28 August and 5 September 1939; *Swadesamitran*, 5 September 1939.

1939. Though Congress leaders sympathized unreservedly with the British Government's war aims, the Congress Working Committee took exception to a war being forced on Indian without her consent. However it would extend its unstinted co-operation in the preparation of war efforts provided the British *Raj* elucidated its future policy towards India and was prepared to execute it forthwith 'to the largest possible extent.'[1] As no satisfactory assurance came from the British Government or the Government of India the committee called upon the Congress ministries to resign. In accordance with this directive the Premier of Madras moved the anti-war resolution[2] in the Legislative Assembly on 26 October 1939. The resolution was passed and the Assembly adjourned *sine die*. With this the ministry resigned.[3]

When the executive committee of the Justice Party met on 28 October 1939 to consider the resignation of the Congress ministry and to re-evaluate the future programme of the party

1 *Indian Annual Register*, 1939, II, p. 231, quoted in R. C. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, p. 598. See also B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. II, pp. 129 130.

2 'This Assembly regrets that the British Government have made India a participant in the war between Great Britain and Germany without the consent of the people of India and have further in complete disregard of Indian opinion passed laws and adopted measures curtailing the powers and activities of the Provincial Governments. This Assembly recommends to the Government to convey to the Government of India and through them to the British Government that in consonance with the avowed aims of the present war, it is essential in order to secure the co-operation of the Indian people that the principles of democracy be applied to India and her policy be guided by her people, and that India should be regarded as an independent nation entitled to frame her own constitution, and further that suitable action should be taken in so far as it is possible in the immediate present to give effect to that principle in regard to the present governance of India including arrangements whereby all war measures in this province may be undertaken with the consent of and executed through the Provincial Government. This Assembly profoundly regrets that the situation in India has not been rightly understood by His Majesty's Government when authorising the statement that has been made on their behalf in regard to India'. *MLAD* Vol. XXIV October, 1939, p. 56.

3 Nilkan A. Perumal, *Rajaji*, p. 55.

in the light of the changed political climate of the country, three issues dominated the proceedings: the immediate question of supporting and extending cooperation to the war effort; deciding whether or not to accept office if the party was called upon to do so; and formulating a firm policy for attaining Tamilnad. Without any discussion a unanimous decision was reached to support the British *Raj* in its 'hour of trial.' On the question of accepting office the pro-British interests in the party were in favour of acceptance, because it would thus be easier to negotiate when the British Government considered further constitutional reforms for the country. Those who were opposed argued that unless the party obtained a clear mandate from the people it should not form a ministry, otherwise it would stand condemned both by the people and the Congress Party. This they argued would weaken their demand for Tamilnad instead of strengthening it. Naicker supported the latter group and called upon the members of the committee to give their unanimous verdict on this vital issue. As the committee was dominated by Naicker's men, the pro-British group had no chance and therefore voted with the others, thus deciding against accepting office. Finally the party decided that to work for the independence of Tamilnad should be the 'principal post-war demand of the Justice Party.'[1]

The executive committee's decision to demand a separate Tamilnad and Naicker's vigorous propaganda for it were criticized by the nationalist press. They were unanimous in condemning Naicker and the Justice Party for following a retrograde policy and undermining the unity of the country. Naicker's exhortation for an independent Tamilnad, said *Swadesamitran*, was not only 'mischievous' but 'dangerous' especially when the Indian National Congress was demanding *swaraj* for the whole country.[2] Another paper, *Dinamani*, ridiculed the idea as

1 *Kudi Arasu*, 5 November 1939; *Mail*, 29 October and 15 November 1939; *Sunday Observer*, 5 November 1939.

2 For the Justicites the Indian National Congress was a 'Brahman protection agency' unfit to look after the vast majority of non-Brahmans in the country. In the October executive committee meeting they repudiated the Congress claim that it represented the various group interests in the country and appealed to the British Government not to negotiate any constitutional changes with the Congress alone as this would not bind the non-Brahmans in the South. *Sunday Observer*, 5 November 1939; *Swadesamitran*, 18 November 1939.

visionary.[1] Still another paper, the *Mail*, felt sorry for the 'great political party declining into a narrow and separatist sect' and criticized Naicker for 'sinning against the light.' It called on Naicker to define Tamilnad and its geographical boundaries and pointed out that the 'idea of constituting an unidentified Tamilnad into a separate nationality' would be impracticable.[2]

The criticism of the *Mail* challenged Naicker to justify his demand for an independent Tamil country and afforded an opportunity for him to defend his concept of a Tamil nation through an English daily and elucidate all details connected with its formation. In his lengthy exposition Naicker maintained that the concept of a Tamil nation was nothing new but had been adumbrated since the inception of the Justice Party. This concept had manifested itself as a political credo only in 1937 when the 'political Brahmans' under the aegis of the Congress threatened non-Brahman cultural and economic interests. The geographical boundary of the Tamil nation, which was equated with the Dravidian nation Naicker explained, would approximate to the teriitory of the composite State of Madras and the adjoining territories where the four major Dravidian linguistic groups lived. A unitary form of government was envisaged for the moment. but if that in practice was found to be unworkable or unsuitable, a federation of linguistic provinces would be formed. Until its defence potentialities were strengthened it would be a British protectorate. Furthermore, Naicker assured his readers, that in the Dravidian nation the interests of minorities would be fully safeguarded, and equal opportunity would be afforded to everyone without caste differences.[3]

Having elucidated his concept of the Dravidian nation, Naicker began to work for its fulfilment in dead earnest. Meetings were organized specifically for popularizing the Dravidanad demand. Naicker also attempted to make a formal alliance with the leaders of the Muslim League and the Scheduled Castes Federation. Even though there had always been a loose alliance among them, it did not coalesce into a united front to achieve

1 *Dinamani*, 16 November 1939.

2 *Mail*, 15 November 1939.

3 *Kudi Arasu*, 26 November 1939; *Mail* 20 November 1939.

their political objectives. From the available records it looks as though Naicker planned for such a united front, first at the provincial level and later at the national level, in order to make his demand strong and convincing. But his success could not be assessed for want of proper party records.

Despite this drawback the scanty material available throws some light on Naicker's efforts in the early months of 1940 to gain national recognition for his demand. In the first week of January 1940 Naicker went to Bombay specifically to meet M. A. Jinnah and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the leaders of the Muslim League and the Scheduled Castes Federation respectively. On 6 January he met Ambedkar and explained to him the Justice Party's attitude to the Congress, its stand on Hindi and the need for demanding a separate country for the Dravidians. On the following day, Naicker had a lengthy discussion lasting over three hours with Jinnah on the same subject. Apart from these two, Naicker had useful discussions with two Maharashtrian leaders, V. P. Jadev and M. R. Jayakar.[1]

No detailed account of what transpired at the meetings is available. Yet according to a report which appeared in *Kudi Arasu*, on 28 January both Jinnah and Ambedkar seemed to have given their moral support to Naicker. According K. M. Balasubramaniam, one of the participants in these conversations, Naicker seemed to have sought the support of these two leaders specifically for the Dravidanad claim, which they were glad to extend. Besides this, a firm understanding was reached on the formation of an anti-Congress front in the country.[2]

On his return from Bombay Naicker became a spokesman for the Muslim League in the province. Jinnah's leadership and his statesmanship were praised at all public meetings held by the Justicites. His two-nation theory, advancing reasons for establishing a separate Muslim nation, was commended and upheld as the only solution for the Muslims to live honourably in a nation dominated by Aryan Brahmana. The League's role in the politics of the nation, Naicker said, was not to disrupt

1 *Kudi Arasu*, 21 January 1940.

2 Interview with K. M. Balasubramaniam on 28 July 1969.

national unity but to defend the rights and privileges of the Muslims and all other minorities in the country.[1]

In return the provincial leaders of the Muslim League gave their full support to Naicker's campaign against Hindi and his demand for Dravidanad, and they attended in great strength the public meetings arranged for this purpose. Very few meetings were held without a member of the Muslim League addressing them. On 21 February 1940, when the Government of Madras abolished compulsory Hindi in a bid to win the co-operation of all political parties.[2] Jinnah was the first to send his congratulatory message to Naicker. In his message Jinnah said:

> Your efforts to prevent (the) Congress Government to enforce Hindi upon unwilling people and your sufferings and sacrifices in that struggle have met with well deserved success. I am sure that those who suffered will have satisfaction that their great sacrifices were not in vain.[3]

A month later Naicker had an opportunity to lend his support to the Muslim League leader. In March 1940 when Jinnah declared at the Lahore session of the Muslim League that the Muslims should have a separate independent nation, Naicker was the first in the South to issue a press statement in support of it. He eulogized Jinnah's two-nation theory 'as the sanest way of settling the baffling Hindu Muslim problem' and contended that this doctrine was but the logical outcome of two years of Āryan dominated Congress rule in the country. Naicker said:

---

1 *Mail*, 22 January 1940; *Kudi Arasu*, 28 January 1940.

2 Although Hindi was abolished as a compulsory subject in the school curricula, to pacify the provincial Congress leaders it was retained as an optional subject in the first three forms and further grants were promised for its extension to the higher forms. The government made this out to be the decision best calculated to further a practical knowledge of the Hindi language amongst the students in the presidency. As expected, both Naicker and Rajaji expressed their general satisfaction at the government decision, although they criticized some of its provisions. *Mail*, 21 and 23 February 1940; *Kudi Arasu*, 28 January 1940.

3 *Kudi Arasu*, 3 March 1940.

> Two years of Congress regime, which was so Āryan ridden, could not but create a sense of despair in the minds of all non-Āryans ....It is but a natural desire on the part of the Muslims to live as a separate nation.... Mr. Jinnah's arguments for this partition are cogent and unassailable and there is nothing wrong in that claim.[1]

Thereafter Naicker began to speak more on the lines of dividing the country into three parts: Dravidanad, Muslim India and Āryan land. In all the public meetings that were held between March and June 1940, Naicker advocated the 'three-nation doctrine' as the only solution for solving the political impasse in the country.[2] At a public meeting held on 4 April Naicker said that if the 'Tamils wanted to be free from the Brahman-Banya domination in the cultural, economic and political fields' the only answer was a separate country for the Dravidians.[3] A few days later, at the Justice Party conference, two important resolutions were passed: one supporting Jinnah's two-nation doctrine and the other requesting the government to take up the Dravidanad question along with the League's demands whenever constitutional changes were considered.[4] In line with its separatist policy the Justice Party organized the Dravidanad Partition Day celebrations throughout the province in the third week of April. And on the 20th of that month meetings were held in 26 centres in the presidency.[5] These events led to the organization of a special conference on 2 June 1940 at Kāñchipuram, wherein apart from passing a resolution demanding a separate state for the Dravidians, a map of India showing Dravidanad was displayed. The whole of South India and the Deccan including a portion of Bengal were shown as comprising Dravidanad in the map.[6]

---

1 *Mail* 30 March 1940; *Kudi Arasu*, 31 March 1940.

2 *Kudi Arasu*, 31 March 7, 14 and 28 April; 4.11 and 18 May; 9 and 16 June. 1940; *Sunday Observer*, 7 and 14 April; 11 and 18 May; 16 June 1940.

3 *Mail*, 5 April 1940; *Sunday Observer*, 14 April 1940.

4 *Kudi Arasu* and *Sunday Observer*, 14 April 1940; *Mail*, 10 April 1940.

5 *Mail*, 21 April 1940; *Sunday Observer*, 28 April 1940.

6 *Sunday Observer* and *Kudi Arasu*, 9 June 1940; *Mail*, 3 June 1940.

Such conferences demanding Dravidanad were held in quick succession all over the Tamil districts. At those conferences resolutions demanding the establishment of Dravidanad were passed and its map was regularly exhibited. By all these efforts the Justicites no doubt succeeded in creating public awareness of their demand, but to achieve this political aim their party organization was hopelessly inefficient and torn by factional disputes. From December 1938, Naicker's leadership only weakened the unity of the party and resulted in exacerbating existing differences within it.

II

The executive committee's election of Naicker as the president of the confederation and consequently as the leader of the Justice Party was not well received by the powerful orthodox group which had consistently opposed his views on traditional culture and religion. This group was further strengthened by the support it received from the Rajan faction, which appeared to have strongly reacted to Naicker's role in promoting the Raja of Bobbili's interests in preference to Rajan's at the Tanjore confederation in 1932. On the other hand, Naicker had the support of the Council Justice Party led by Muthiah Chettiar and the Young Justicites headed by P. Balasubramaniam. In addition he was also supported by Soundrapandiya Nadar and Viswanathan who had to shoulder greater responsibilities as a result of his imprisonment. They had acted as his trusted colleagues while he was in prison.[1]

Despite this support, the executive committee of the Justice Party, the highest policy making body, was dominated by the conservative group. When they elected Naicker, they maintained that it was purely a temporary arrangement until one of the old guard resumed the leadership of the party.[2]

Perhaps aware of the intentions of the conservatives Naicker was determined to enlarge the executive committee to weaken their hold on the party and consolidate his own position

1 Interview with K. M. Balasubramaniam on 28 July 1969; Mail, 1 December 1938.

2 Interview with Kanchi Kalyanasundaram on 19 September 1969.

in it. As his chances of presiding over the confederation were remote in view of the case pending in court, he wanted his friends such as Pannirselvam, Soundarapandiyan and Viswanathan to move an amendment to the party constitution at the confederation so that he might be given powers to nominate 14 members to the executive committee in addition to the elected members. He seems to have told them that as the committee was dominated by the conservatives, new blood should be infused into it in order to enable the leader to adopt progressive policies needed for the changing socio-political climate in the country. Furthermore he seems to have impressed on them that a larger executive committee consisting of members representing various group interest was essential for the healthy growth of the party.[1]

As Naicker's leadership was essential at that juncture, Pannirselvam and his colleagues agreed to move an amendment to the party constitution at the confederation. In the meantime Naicker had been sent to prison and the members of the executive committee requested Pannirselvam to deputize for him at the confederation, which he agreed to do. On 31 December 1938, at the subjects committee, Pannirselvam moved a resolution which sought to give special powers to the leaders of the party to nominate 14 members to the executive committee in addition to the elected members. He contended that the amendment was deemed necessary in view of Naicker's desire to introduce new measures to strengthen the party with the consent of a large body of members representing various group interests.[2]

From the proceedings of the committee meeting one can assume that there was considerable opposition to expanding its membership. Some considered that the principle of nomination itself was undemocratic, while others were apprehensive that this would amount to giving Naicker dictatorial powers. Their fears, if one considers the later events, were justified. Some others questioned an expansion of the committee without hearing Naicker's own views. In spite of their objection the amendment was carried.[3]

1 *Kudi Arasu*, 17 December 1938; *Sunday Observer* 18 December 1938.

2 *Kudi Arasu*, 7 January 1939; *Sunday Observer*, 8 January 1939.

3 *Kudi Arasu*, 7 January 1939; *Mail*, 1 January 1939, Interview with Balasubramaniam on July 1969.

No party records are available which give the size of the executive committee, the policy making body of the Justice Party. Accordingly to K. M. Balasubramaniam and Kāñchi Kalyanasundaram the number of members elected to the committee varied from year to year.[1] But one may safely assume that the constitution as amended gave Naicker if not a majority at least a greater voice in the committee.

The list of office bearers approved by the confederation for 1939 indicates that Naicker's followers held most of the key positions. Out of the five vice-presidents elected, Pannirselvam, Muthiah Chettiar and A. Doraiswami Mudaliar belonged to Naicker's group. The party's general organizer, Viswanathan, and one of the divisional organizers, Annadurai were also Naicker's henchmen. The power to choose the general secretary was again given to Naicker.[2]

Naicker's position was further consolidated through the progressive Tamilianization of the Justice Party since the resignation of the Raja of Bobbili. The Telugus showed lack of interest in its activities and consequently very few became office-bearers. When the new office bearers were elected for 1939 only five out of 14 were Telugus. And even among them, only the zamindar of Mirzapuram, B. Ramachandra Reddi and C. Basu Dev[3] exerted influence on party circles.

It seemed that there was no immediate threat to Naicker's leadership in the party. Nonetheless his followers remained alert, and, whenever an opportunity arose, they placed their men in advantageous positions. In March 1939, when Basu Dev resigned his general secretaryship in order to devote his undivided attention to labour problems,[4] his position was taken up by the

---

1 Interviews with Balasubramaniam and Kanchi Kalyanasundaram on 28 July and 19 September 1969 respectively.

2 *Mail*, 1 January 1939; *Sunday Observer*, 8 January 1939.

3 *Mail*, 1 January 1939; *Kudi Arasu*, 7 January 1939.

4 C. Babu Dev was a labour leader in the city of Madras. As there was a strike at the Choolai Mills he resigned the general secretaryship of the Justice Party to devote his full attention to solve this industrial dispute. Subsequently when the Justice party appointed a Committee to look into the welfare of the workers involved in the strike, he was co-opeds as a member. *Mail*, 27 March 1939.

party's chief organizer, Viswanathan. T. Sundara Rao Nayudu, a supporter of Naicker, became the party's chief organizer.[1]

In May 1939 Naicker was released from prison on considerations of health before completing the full term of imprisonment. To celebrate his release a series of public meetings were held in the Tamil districts, and these meetings and public gatherings were boycotted by Rajan and his followers. Naicker ignored them, made no move to win their confidence and did not consult them on matters relating to party organization.[2]

Soon after coming out of prison, Naicker wished to leave for Tiruvarur to meet Pannirselvam and Samiappa Mudaliar and discuss with them the names of candidates who would be suitable for nomination to the executive committee. Many expected Viswanathan would accompany Naicker and play an important role in choosing the new members. Two days before Naicker's trip Viswanathan had resigned the secretaryship without assigning reason, though rumours were current that it was due to sharp difference with Naicker over selection of candidates for nomination.[3]

Viswanathan's resignation was viewed as a setback to the organizational work of the party. According to Vedachalam, Viswanathan was the first general secretary to realize the importance of grassroot organizations. He seriously attempted to put new life into old branches and to open new ones throughout the Tamil districts.[4] After becoming the secretary in March 1939 he helped to establish 90 new branches, each consisting of at least 22 members with duly elected president, secretary, treasurer and committee members. To put it in K. M. Balasubramaniam's words, 'Viswanathan was responsible for giving a shape to the tattered Justice Party in the first few months of 1939.[5]

Naicker was upset by Viswanathan's resignation and appealed to him to continue until a suitable person was found to take his place. Rajan came out from his aloofness and persuaded him to withdraw his resignation in the larger interests of the party.

1 *Mail*, 27 March 1939.
2 Interview with Balasubramaniam on 28 July 1969.
3 *Mail*, 21 June 1939; *Sunday Observer* 25 June 1939.
4 Interview with Vedachalam on 28 July 1969.
5 Interview with Balasubramaniam on 28 July 1969.

Similar appeals were also made by Viswanathan's close friends and co-workers.[1] The air was thick with rumours that Naicker made some conciliatory moves and settled his differences with Viswanathan. Although this cannot be confirmed by the available records Viswanathan did withdraw his resignation and continued to serve as the general secretary until he finally broke with Naicker in 1942. This episode is discussed later in this section.

As soon as the differences with Viswanathan were settled Naicker left for Tiruvarur on 20 June to meet Pannirselvam and Samiappa Mudaliar and discuss the list of names for nomination to the party executive committee. With their help a list was prepared in which Naicker included some of his supporters, among whom were Vedachalam, C. N. Annadurai, Nayagam and Kumaraswami Pillai.[2] Besides matters relating to the organization of the party, the adoption of a party flag, the anti-Hindi agitation and the Dravidanad question were discussed before they planned to meet for the next executive committee meeting in August 1939.

A week before the executive committee meeting on 3 August 1939, Rajan strongly attacked the policy of the party against Hindi and made public his differences with Naicker. Although there were some genuine fears among the Tamil academics regarding the language policy pursued by the Congress Rajan said that he could not subscribe to the view that 'Tamil was in danger of extinction because Hindi was introduced in schools as a compulsory subject.'

> The Tamil language has withstood many attempts and attacks made on it these last 2000 years I do not know how many Rajagopalachariars there might have been and what attempts they might have made on it but it has survived them all. I am quite sure that such a language will survive this Mr. Rajagopalachariar also, great and powerful though he is.[3]

Many were shocked at Rajan's statement, for it undermined the rationale on which the anti-Hindi movement was conducted

1 Interview with Sivagnanam on 10 September 1969.

2 Interview with Balasubramaniam on 28 July 1969.

3 *Swadesamitran*, 4 August 1939; *Mail* 4 August 1939.

They demanded that he should withdraw the statement failing which suitable action must be taken against him by the committee. Nevertheless Naicker was unwilling to cross swords with him on this issue on the eve of the executive committee meeting.[1]

Rajan did not attend this meeting which was held on 11 August 1939. His absence allowed Naicker to place his men in various committees without resistance. All the 14 members nominated to the executive committee were either his staunch followers or his close friends.[2] Naicker also suggested the appointment of a new organizing secretary when a membership drive was discussed. Viswanathan, in his capacity as the general secretary, was managing both the organizational and administrative functions superbly, and he had demonstrated his initiative and enterprise in reorganizing the branch offices in various centres during Naicker's absence in prison. In spite of this work he had incurred the displeasure of Naicker in the disagreement about the nomination of members to the executive committee, and Naicker was biding his time to curb his powers. When the opportunity came he advocated in the name of efficiency the bifurcation of the administrative and organizational work so that the general secretary could devote his attention solely to administration. This suggestion was acceptable to the executive committee and it elected Annadurai, one of the youngest members in the party, as the organizing secretary.[3]

Annadurai, who accepted this position, was born in a middle class Senguntha Mudaliar community on 15 September 1909 at Kāñchipuram. He had his schooling in his home town before joining the Pachaiyappa's College in Madras for higher studies in 1928. At the college he distinguished himself and won a reputation as a polished and eloquent speaker both in English and Tamil and as a great prose stylist. In 1935 he completed his university education with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree in Economics, Politics and History.[4]

1 Interview with Sivagnanam on 10 September 1969.

2 Interview with Vedachalam on 27 July 1969.

3 *Mail*, 12 August 1939; *Sunday Observer*, 20 August 1969.

4 Interview with C. V. Rajagopal and C. P. Raghupathi on 5 October 1969 respectively.

During his college days Annadurai had kept himself aloof from active politics, but the speeches he had made on various occasions in the student union and the debates in which he participated at the Y. M. C. A. showed his leanings towards the Justice Party. This was strengthened when he came into contact with the leaders of the Young Justicites, chiefly P. Balasubramaniam and T. A. V. Nathan. His mentor, Basu Dev, recruited him to the Justice Party in 1935.[1]

In early 1936 Annadurai contested the municipal election in Madras and lost heavily to the rival Congress candidate. Despite this defeat his abilities were recognized and he was accepted as a leading speaker in Justicite ranks. The anti-Hindi movement gave him further opportunities to display his oratorical skill and his ability to organize and lead agitations.[2]

For organizing the anti-Hindi agitation and for picketing Annadurai was imprisoned in the Madras penitentiary for four months from 26 September 1938. Three months later, in December, Naicker was also confined in the same prison. There Annadurai, for the first time in his brief political career, came under the direct influence of Naicker, and a master-disciple relationship developed between them. Over the months and years this relationship deepened and Annadurai became an ardent admirer not only of Naicker but of the social and political dogmas for which he stood. Thereafter Annadurai became one of the leading protagonists of the demand for Dravidanad and a spirited advocate of social and economic justice in society. Naicker saw that Annadurai had the potential of a great politician, and in recognition of his merits had him appointed as the organizing secretary of the Justice Party in 1939.[3]

Annadurai's election as the organizing secretary revived some enthusiasm among the younger members of the Justicites who were popularly known as the Young Justicites. Propaganda meetings

---

1 Interview with Rajagopal on 5 October 1969. A. Maraimalaiyan *Perarinar Annavin Peruvalvu* (Biography of Annadurai), (Madras, 1967) p. 96; *Manram*, 9 November 1969.

2 *Manram*, 9 November 1969, Interview with Sivagnanam and Rajagopal on 10 September and 5 October 1969 respectively.

3 A. Maraimalaiyan, *Perarinar Annavin Peruvalvu*, p. 119.

became numerous and were usually addressed by them. Annadurai himself made extensive tours of the Tamil districts, addressed public meetings and student union meetings arranged in the colleges. Previously student unions in colleges were addressed by Congressmen, but Annadurai changed this trend. He was one of the very few Justicites who could address meetings both in English and Tamil with ease and confidence. Consequently he was able to carry the message of Naicker with missionary zeal both among the masses and to the centres of intellectual aristocracy. College students, literates and illiterates flocked to the meetings where Annadurai often spoke in Tamil with the 'Niagara of eloquence of never ending flow.'[1] Although his exuberant verbosity inebriated his hearers, Annadurai's speeches offered no clues whatsoever to the party programme. In a more polished language than Naicker, Annadurai attacked the Brahman life-style and called on his audience to 'join the army of Ramasami Naicker' if they wanted freedom from political, economic and foreign enslavement.[2]

Annadurai's speeches achieved nothing spectacular at this stage except to recruit some members to the Justice Party. Even this was not possible when the Congress resigned in protest over the British Government's decision to involve India in the Second World War. With the Congress out of office the Justice Party attack on the Congress lost its force and meaning, because it offered unconditional support to *Pax Britannica*. This only helped the Congress to brand the Justicites as unpatriotic, possessing no dignity or self-respect.[3] As if to prove the Congress leaders' accusation, the Council Justicites and the pro-British faction became unusually active, hoping that the leadership of the party would give them a mandate to form an interim ministry in Madras. To decide on the acceptance of office the Justicites met at Muthiah Chettiar's palace at Adyar in Madras city in November 1939.[4]

At this largely attended co-ordinated meeting of the members of the executive committee and the Justice Council Party, the pro-British group, which was also opposed to Naicker, was in favour of

1 Interview with Rajagopal on 5 October 1969.

2 *Mail*, 22 August 1939.

3 *Swadesamitran*, 29 August 1939.

4 Interview with Balasubramaniam on 28th July 1969.

accepting office. This view was supported by Muthiah Chettiar and the conservatives. The attitude of the group led by Rajan is not clear because of lack of information. Nevertheless, if the subsequent events are of any indication, one can presume that Rajan favoured acceptance of office. On the other hand Pannirselvam, Soundrapandiya Nadar, the Young Justicites and Annadurai stood by Naicker and opposed forming any Justice Ministry unless it obtained a mandate from the people. After a prolonged discussion, the meeting decided against acceptance.[1] Though the pro-British and the conservative elements were unhappy at the decision and were bitter with Naicker and his group, they did not raise this issue to precipitate an open split, but thenceforward they stood aloof from party activities.

Naicker's men thus had the field for themselves to further consolidate their position. This was achieved by intensive propaganda in favour of Dravidanad, the only main plank in their programme since compulsory Hindi had been abolished in February of that year. The Dravidanad propaganda of Naicker, though carried on in a big way, failed to evoke the anticipated enthusiasm among the public because the Congress programme for national freedom was more exciting and loftier than the Justicites' separatist policy. Despite this limited public support, Naicker's men succeeded in their primary aim of recruiting more supporters for the Dravidanad ideology. And the absence of any aspirant for the party's leadership among the old guard made it easy for Naicker to get elected as leader for a second term when the Fifteenth Justice Confederation met at Tiruvarur on 24 August 1940.[2]

The confederation was significant not only because Naicker was unanimously elected as the leader for a second term but also because certain steps were taken to strengthen the party and realize its social and political objectives. In conformity with its social objective of uplifting the non-Brahman communities two main resolutions were unanimously passed. The first called upon the government to allocate separate constituencies to non-Brahmans, and the second wanted the provisions of the Communal Order to be altered so that they could have more appointments both in the provincial and

[1] *Mail*, 15 November 1939, Sunday Observer 12 November 1939.

[2] *Kudi Arasu*, 25 August 1940; *Mail*, 24 August 1940; *Hindu*, 24 and 25 August 1940.

central services.[1] But these resolutions did not satisfy the intransigent Young Justicites who had lost faith in resolutions and making grandiose speeches about them without finding a solution on political lines. Nevertheless they were pleased at the appointment of the two special committees aimed at drafting a constitution for the still-born Dravidanad and at strengthening the Justice Party by approaching eminent non-Brahmans who had kept aloof since the 1937 election and requesting them to join its ranks. As the personnel of these committees were carefully chosen with adequate representation for all the interest groups, the Young Justicites hoped that they would function smoothly and fulfil their purposes.[2]

But the committees failed to function from the day they were appointed. No formal or informal meeting was ever convened even to consider the preliminaries. Nor did any of the senior members of the party ask the chairman to convene the committees.[3] However some of the younger members of the two committees, such as P. Balasubramaniam and Viswanathan, appealed to Naicker, who happened to be the chairman of both of them, to hold meetings so that the party workers might be kept informed of the steps taken to realize their objectives.[4]

Available records do not elucidate Naicker's reluctance to convene the committees, but two possible reasons for this torpidity can be given on the basis of the interviews the writer had with Naicker's colleagues of that period. According to them he had little faith in taking decisions collectively in committee meetings and implementing them, for he was more of a social reformer than a politician fighting issues on constitutional lines. Therefore they claimed that Naicker avoided committee meetings and discussions but at times consulted certain prominent persons whom he considered to be his supporters, and on the basis of such consultations he made important political statements at public meetings. Even while making such statements, they claimed, he did not make a

1 *Mail*, 25 August 1940; *Namatu Kurikkol*, pp. 27-29.

2 *Namattu Kurikkol*, pp. 34-35.

3 *Sunday Observer*, 31 May 1942. Interview with Balasubramaniam on 28 July 1969.

4 Interview with Vedachalam on 27 July 1969.

clear distinction between social questions and political issues but interwove his views on both in order to play to the gallery.[1]

The observations of Naicker's former colleagues have some relevance if his statements made after the Tiruvarur confederation are considered in their proper perspective. He was so obsessed with communal representation in services and separate electorates for non-Brahmans that he gave only secondary importance to the Dravidanad issue which had given a new lease of life to what had been a dying party in 1938. An example of his attitude is his speech in Salem on 4 December 1940. In that speech Naicker declared that non-Brahmans would merge with Congress if it 'guaranteed a due share of power' to them without elucidating or elaborating what then would be the Justicites stand on the Dravidanad issue and the future role of their party in politics. Towards the conclusion of this speech he returned to his favourite theme of social justice and said

> the monopoly of the intellectual classes (Brahmans) should cease. When they (non-Brahmans) asked for separate electorates a hue and cry was raised and it was said (that) it would mean division of the community on unhealthy lines, but the same thing was not said when non-Brahmans were dubbed as *sudras* and inferiors and allotted separate places in Brahmin coffee hotels. That pernicious distinction was being observed in railway refreshment rooms also and the sooner the practice was abandoned the better.[2]

True to his statement, Naicker started a local agitation at Trichinopoly protesting against the exclusive dining arrangements made for Brahman passengers in the railway restaurants and succeeded in abolishing this practice in May 1941.[3] At a public meeting, again at Salem, on 26 May 1941 Naicker gave equal importance to the political and social programmes of the party, but towards the end of his speech he said that the crying need of the country was the abolition of all social inequalities, especially those based on birth,

1 Interview with two prominent Justicites who wish to remain anonymous for some years.

2 *Mail*, 5 December 1940.

3 *Mail*, 28 May 1941; *Sunday Observer*, 25 May 1941.

rather than political independence.[1] A couple of months later, in July, he indicated that the Justicites would postpone their demand for Dravidanad till the war ended. On 10 August, once again at a public meeting, Naicker declared that the party had temporarily stopped the agitation for Dravidanad in order to help the government in its war effort, and that it would renew the agitation after the conclusion of the war.[2] Thus Naicker shelved the issue without even consulting the committee which had been appointed to frame a constitution for Dravidanad.

Though Naicker arbitrarily put off the Dravidanad demand, it became the foremost issue among the Justicites in 1942 when an announcement was made on 11 March on the forthcoming visit of the Cripps Mission to India. Leading politicians and political parties including Rajaji welcomed the announcement.[3] Everyone of them expressed satisfaction at the selection of Sir Stafford Cripps as the leader of the mission.[4] The object of the Mission, which was scheduled to arrive in the third week of March, was to explain to 'the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people' the British Government's proposals for the realization of self-government for India after the war. On the announcement of the Cripps Mission Naicker hurriedly consulted some of the members of the committee who were supposed to frame a constitution for the Dravidian state and discussed with them the desirability of sending a Justice delegation to present their case.[5] Accordingly a delegation consisting of Ramasami Naicker, Soundrapandiya Nadar, Samiappa Mudaliar and Muthiah Chettiar met the members of the Cripps Mission on 30 March 1942 and placed before them the Justice Party case for demanding a separate nation for the Dravidians.[6]

1 *Mail*, 27 May 1941; *Sunday Observer*, 25 May 1941.

2 *Mail*, 11 August 1941; *Sunday Observer*, 17 August 1941.

3 NAI., *Government of India, Home Department, Political (Internal), File No.* 221/42—Poll, 1942, p. 1.

4 NAI., *Government of India, Home Department, Political, File No.* 18/3/42, *Poll, (I), Confidential Fortnightly Reports for the month of March* 1942, *S. V. Ramamurthy, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to E. Conran Smith, Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department D.O. No. P.* 4-6, 20 *March* 1942, p. 2.

5 Interview with Balasubramaniam on 28 July 1969.

6 Interview with Kanchi Kalyanasundaram on 19 September 1969

According to Sir Stafford Cripps, the members of the Justice Party delegation impressed on him that the Presidency of Madras should secede from the Indian Union and form itself into a separate union so that the large majority of the non-Brahmans could save themselves from domination by the 'more wealthy and powerful Brahmin population' and obtain political power. This the members of the delegation were not confident of achieving either by a vote in the local legislative assembly or by plebiscite, since in both cases they feared that they would be outmanoeuvred by 'powerful elements'. Therefore to offset this disadvantage the delegation wanted separate electorates 'on such a scale as to give them automatically the majority in the Province'. As this was an 'impracticable suggestion' opposed to democratic traditions Cripps felt that the solution was not in separate electorates but in organization and leadership[1] of the Justice Party so that it could persuade the people of Madras to vote for seceding from the Indian Union. He pointed out

> ....this was a wholly impracticable suggestion and that it would raise the whole question of communal electorates as well, and that until such time as they could persuade the people of Madras to vote in their favour it was not possible within any democratic method at all to give them that majority which they desired. They appreciated this situation but were nevertheless insistent that something should be done to assist them. I pointed out, as sympathetically as possible, that in existing circumstances there was nothing we could do.[2]

Although no party records are available on the interview of the Justice Party delegation with the members of the Cripps Mission, according to the presidential address delivered by Soundrapandiya Nadar at the South Arcot District Justice Party Conference, held on 14 April 1942, at Cuddalore, the members of the delegation pressed for the separation of Dravidanad from the rest of India and urged that until a decision was taken on that issue the non-Brahmans in the presidency should be given separate electorates. According to

---

1 Nicholas Mansergh, *Constitutional Relations between Britain and India: The Transfer of Power*, 1942-7, *Vol, I, The Cripps Mission, January-April* 1942 (London, 1970), pp. 555 and 66-67.

2 Ibid., p. 555.

Nadar the members of the Mission seemed to have 'sympathetically viewed' the Justicite demands. But on the question of separate electorates for non-Brahmans Sir Stafford Cripps seemed to have expressed the view that 'it was not easy of realization.'[1]

Soon after the audience with the Cripps Mission the Justicites had talks with the members and leaders of the Muslim League and the Scheduled Castes Federation in Delhi. Though the nature of the talks is not clear a 'tripartite agreement' was reached according to which the Muslim League and the Scheduled Castes Federation agreed upon a scheme of separate electorates for non-Brahmans.[2]

The details of the Justice delegation's discussions with the members of the Cripps Mission and the full particulars of the so-called 'tripartite agreement' were not reported to the party. Nor was there any sign of the submission of a detailed report even to the members of the executive committee. This, many Justicites thought, was undemocratic, and an unhealthy precedent to be set in a political party. So some Justicites opposed Naicker's leadership and cast doubt on his capacity to lead a political party, especially when the political situation of the country was in a fluid state. Others plainly said without reservation that Naicker possessed neither political leadership nor faith in democratic traditions.[3] In support of their view they pointed out that during his term of office very few committee meetings were held, that his political statements lacked consistency and foresight, and that the Justice delegation was sent to meet the Cripps Mission without proper consultation with any of the committees.[4]

The mounting opposition to Naicker's leadership was not confined to any particular group, but included the members of the Young Justice League, the orthodox group and the followers of Rajan. A large number of office bearers were also opposed to Naicker. The party general-secretary, Viswanathan, turned out to be his arch critic. Annadurai's support was also uncertain, at least in the early stages. In spite of this widespread opposition Naicker was not entirely without supporters. Some of the leading

1 *Mail*, 14 April 1942; *Sunday Observer*, 20 April 1942.

2 *Mail*, 14 April 1942; *Sunday Observer*, 20 April 1942; Hindu, 15 April 1942.

3 Interview with Vedachalam on 27 July 1969.

4 *Sunday Observer*, 31 May 1942.

Justicites like Soundrapandiya Nadar and Samiappa Mudaliar still continued to support him, but he derived his greatest strength mainly from the Self-Respecters who had maintained a separate identity despite joining the Justice Party and who owed allegiance only to him.[1]

Naicker's support among a section of the Justicites and his popularity among the masses, although well known, did not lessen the Young Justicites' determination to replace him by a leader of all-India stature and of great political acumen. At that time there was none in the party of that calibre. But the Young Justicites had in their view Shanmugam Chettiar who had very recently resigned as Dewan of the princely state of Cochin. He was never a staunch Justicite, though he evinced a keen interest in the Justice Party and always sought its support for his own political ends.[2] The Young Justicites favoured him for his proven abilities as a distinguished economist, as the president of the central assembly and as India's representative in five International conferences, including the Ottawa Conference in 1932.[3] P. Balasubramaniam and others of his view considered that if a man of Chettiar's standing were to lead the party their chances of forming a Dravidian state would be improved.[4] As this view became popular among the Justicites some leading members suggested that all those opposed to Naicker should call upon Chettiar and request him to accept the leadership as early as possible so that he could lead a delegation to Britain and convince the British Government of the necessity of creating an independent Dravidian state. It was believed that Balasubramaniam and others did contact Chettiar, apprised him of the situation in the party and sought his approval to nominate him for the leadership of the Justice Party.[5] There are no records however to show how Chettiar responded to this request. He was never nominated, so we must conclude that he declined.

In the last week of April 1942 some of the leading Justicites who had opposed Naicker's leadership met at Patro's residence.

1 Interview with Vedachalam on 27 July 1969.

2 K. M. Balasubramaniam, *South Indian Celebrities*, Vol. I (Madras, 1934), pp. 5-6.

3 Ibid, p. 9.

4 *Mail*, 20 May 1942.

5 Interview with Vedachalam on 27 July 1969.

On the same day and at the same place the Young Justicites also held their executive committee meeting to consider a change in the party leadership. By joint consultation they framed two resolutions to be moved at public meetings which they planned to organize later. The pith of both the resolutions was that Shanmugam Chettiar should replace Naicker as the leader of the Justice Party. On 19 May 1942 the Young Justice League held an executive committee meeting, which was later converted into a public meeting, at Royapettah in Madras, and unanimously adopted both resolutions in a modified form.[1] In the modified version the first resolution, which sought to change the party leadership, cited a number of instances where Naicker had fallen short of their expectations as leader of the party as reasons for favouring a change. The resolution ran as follows:

> Whereas Periyar E. V. Ramaswami, leader of the Justice Party, has failed to take real interest in the organizational work of the party, in spite of the repeated requests of the rank and file; whereas he has failed to report to the Executive of the Party the result of the interview that the Justice Party Delegation had with Sir Stafford Cripps; whereas he has failed to convene a Confederation of the Party although 21 months have elapsed since the last Confederation held at Tiruvarur; whereas he has failed to convene monthly meetings of the Executive Committee as enjoined in the Constitution; and whereas he has failed to convene even a single meeting of the Sub-Committee appointed by the Confederation to approach eminent Non-Brahman leaders who are outside the Party, and persuade them to join the Party, and of the Sub-Committee appointed to draft a constitution for a separate Dravidastan; this meeting resolves that the time has come when there should be a change for the better in the leadership of the Party.[2]

Balasubramaniam moved a second resolution, which was seconded by Mrs Kothainayaki Ammal, suggesting the name of Shanmugam Chettiar as leader of the Justice Party. Both resolutions were

1 *Sunday Observer*, 24 May 1942.

2 *Sunday Observer*, 31 May 1942.

passed unanimously. Finally the meeting called on the members of the Justice party executive committee to convene a meeting as early as possible to make arrangements to hold a confederation for electing a new leader.[1]

At the same time meetings favouring Naicker's continued leadership of the Justice Party were also held. As meetings both for and against his leadership were on the increase, Annadurai dwelt on the existing crisis in the party in his Tamil weekly, *Dravida Nadu*, in May 1942. In that issue he wrote, without involving himself in the controversy, that as Shanmugam Chettiar commanded the respect of the party workers and enjoyed the confidence of Naicker, Naicker would be immensely pleased if Chettiar came forward to lead the party. This statement was interpreted as a definite shift in Annadurai's stand, although he had not committed himself to either of the groups. Nor had he stated categorically that Naicker should step down in favour of Chettiar. His statement lent itself to different interpretations by the rival groups:

> It is understood that some of the leading Justicites are trying to make Sir R. K. Shanmukham accept the leadership of the Justice Party. As the separation of Dravidastan from North India will become the chief plank of the Justice Party's political programme in the near future, leading Justicites feel that Sir R. K. Shanmukham as the leader of the Party will be able to render yeoman service if he were to go to England and convince the British people of the just claims for Dravidastan. It is also learnt that a deputation of Justicites may soon call upon Sir Shanmukham and request him to accept the leadership. Sir R. K. Shanmukham has the full confidence and friendship of Periyar E. V. Ramaswami and commands the respect of the workers of the Party. He also commands an international reputation as a statesman. There is no doubt that if such a leader among Dravidians were to come forward to lead the Party, our Periyar will be immensely pleased.[2]

As the members of the Young Justice League were organizing themselves to topple the leadership of Naicker, certain unexpected

1 *Mail*, 20 May 1942.

2 *Dravida Nadu*, n.d., quoted in the *Sunday Observer*, 31 May 1942.

changes suddenly came about in the party. Viswanathan, who had been the general-secretary since 1939, made fourteen charges against Naicker and resigned his office in June 1942.[1] One of the main accusations was that Naicker used the party to serve his own personal ends; a charge which was also repeated several times in his later political career.[2] However Naicker without much ado accepted his resignation and by the powers vested in him offered the position to Annadurai as a tactical gesture.

Annadurai accepted the important post without hesitation, as this provided him with a sound base on which to build up his own political career. Though, he was aware of Naicker's limitations as a politician, he felt Naicker's continued leadership was essential if only to keep the masses behind the party. Otherwise they would support the Congress and strengthen its claim that it alone represented the aspirations of the Indian people. As no other Justice Party leader enjoyed the support of the masses, Annadurai considered it wise to support Naicker in his hour of trial and help him transform the Justice Party into a viable force in the politics of the country.[3] Therefore Annadurai worked with him to thwart any move against Naicker's leadership.

Annadurai's support and his efforts to strengthen Naicker's hand did not alter the situation appreciably. By the middle of 1944 opposition to Naicker had grown to such an extent that he was obliged to hold the annual confederation of the Justice Party sooner than he intended. In july 1944 he announced that the sixteenth confederation of the Justice Party would be held in August that year.[4]

The oppositionists greeted this announcement with great Jubilation as this would help them change the leadership of the party. They rallied round Rajan, and on his advice they toured the Tamil districts to enlist support for their cause. To counter their efforts Annadurai also went on a tour to canvass support, but his impressions were not encouraging, for many Justice leaders,

---

1 T. M. Parthasarathi, *D.M.K. Varalaru* (History of the D.M.K.), (Madras, 1961), p. 32.

2 Interview with Vedachalam on 27 July 1969.

3 Interview with A.V.P. Asaithambi on 30 November 1969.

4 *Kudi Arasu*, 15 July 1944.

including Naicker's close friends like Soundrapandiya Nadar and Samiappa Mudaliar, favoured a more enlightened and democratic leadership.[1]

Although Annadurai was deeply concerned about the unfavourable trend, he was confident of obtaining the sympathy of party workers by exposing the weakness of the old guard for titles and positions offered by the British Government. Many Justicites had been honoured for their services to the government with knighthoods and lesser titles like Dewan Bahadur, Rao Bahadur, and Rao Saheb. They attached great importance to these honours and at times they even resented when they were referred to without their titles. Equal importance was attached to the positions they held in the public bodies, in the judiciary and in the various special committees constituted by the government to supervise the war preparations.[2] Fully aware of the old guard's sentimental attachment to these things and to put them in an awkward position on this score with the party workers, Annadurai drafted a resolution which sought to force them to give up their positions and honours, to change the nomenclature of the Justice Party and to transform it into a social organization so that it would not offer to anybody any incentive to seek power or position. The resolution, which was known as the Annadurai Resolution, is as follows:

(i) The members of the Justice Party should renounce titles such as Sir, Dewan Bahadur, Rao Bahadur, Rao Saheb, etc.,

(ii) should give up positions honorary or otherwise in various bodies and committees constituted by the government for the war effort and other purposes; and nominated members, etc., in local bodies should resign and that none of the party members should be allowed to contest any election in any constituency constituted by the government;

(iii) should drop existing caste titles and should never append them to names in future:

---

1 Interview wirh Rajagopal on 5 October 1969.

2 Interview with Asaithambi on 30 November 1969.

(iv) and that the South Indian Liberal Federation (Justice Party) should henceforth be known as the Dravida Kazhagam.[1*]

As Naicker agreed to the resolution, it was published in *Kudi Arasu* on 5 August 1944. The old guard were furious when they realized the immediate implication of the resolution and Naicker's motive for publishing it so early. Not only Rajan but even Naicker's friends were opposed to the clause which sought to change the party's name into Dravida Kazhagam. The publication of the resolution, therefore, only aggravated the rift, and as a result further vigorous canvassing was started sooner than expected in the city and in the districts to test their strength at the forthcoming confederation. The old guard were determined if not to topple Naicker's leadership at least to preserve the party's identity, while the Naicker group was resolved to get a mandate in favour of the resolution.[2]

Some of the leading Justicites, especially Soundrapandiya Nadar, who still enjoyed Naicker's confidence despite differences, attempted to bring about unity between the two factions in the party. A week before the confederation both sides met and agreed to work unitedly for its success. In spite of this gentleman's agreement, Naicker's group secretely prepared itself to foil any attempt to defeat Annadurai's resolution.[3]

When the sixteenth Justice Party Confederation began its session on 27 August 1944, the proceedings were far from peaceful. Naicker's men planned well, came in full force, and occupied the vantage positions in the conference hall. With them came some 'undesirable elements', with the sole purpose of shouting down P. Balasubramaniam and Viswanathan, the two arch critics of Naicker. The former was to unfurl the Justice Party flag and the latter was to declare the confederation open. From the moment they came to the dais until they had finished their speeches, they were subjected to indiscriminate abuse by the 'unruly elements.'[4] Nor did these spare P. Rathnaswami Pillai, the chairman of the

1* *Namatu Kurikkol*, pp. 40-43; *Kudi Arasu*, 5 August 1944.

2 Interview with Balasubramaniam on 28 July 1969.

3 Ibid.

4 *Kudi Arasu*, 2 September 1944.

reception committee, when he read his address of welcome. They were brought to order only when Naicker was unanimously elected to the chair to preside over the conference. According to the party convention his election to preside over the confederation extended his leadership for another term. With Naicker's election, the morning session concluded.

That afternoon the subjects committee met separately to consider Annadurai's resolution. As the committee was evenly divided his resolution was debated for over 35 hours without reaching any agreement. Consequently Annadurai suggested that, as the resolution proposed certain significant changes in the basic policy of the party, it should be dispassionately discussed at the open session of the conference by the party workers before reaching a decision.[1] Whether the committee agreed to this proposal is not clear from the available records.

On 28 August 1944 the resolution came before the open session of the conference for consideration. As Naicker's men were in large numbers in the audience there was little scope for any discussion. Annadurai in moving the resolution made a long speech giving the reasons for drafting such a 'radical resolution' and for bringing it before the open session. The Justice Party, Annadurai said, was stigmatized as a quisling movement by its 'political enemies', because it pursued pro-British policies and extended support and co-operation to the government in its war efforts. On the other hand the government authorities neither acknowledged the help rendered by the party nor recognized 'its just claims'.[2] In protest against this attitude the Justicites should give up the public positions they held as well as the honours bestowed on them. He added that, despite its new policy, the party would not be respected on account of its past record. Therefore the change of the name into Dravida Kazhagam or Dravidian Federation was necessary, argued Annadurai, to give a new image, vitality and strength to the party. When he completed his speech, C. G. Netto and A. Ganesa Sankaran, the members of the reception committee, unsuccessfully opposed the change of name.[3] Their objections were drowned in a sea of cat-

1 A. Maraimalaiyan, *Perarinar Annavin Peruvalvu*, pp. 1939-40.

2 *Mail*, 29 August 1944; *Kudi Arasu*, 2 September 1944.

3 *Ibid.*

calls and abuse, and in fact they were physically obstructed from making any criticism of the resolution. Thus the 'unruly elements' dominated the open session of the conference and successfully silenced the opposition.[1]

The resolution was passed with a dubious unanimity. Nevertheless, Soundrapandiya Nadar, by the sheer weight of his personality, succeeded in postponing the resolutions coming into operation. On his insistence it was also agreed that all the Justicites who held position and honours should renounce them before 31 March 1945.[2]

Soon after the conclusion of the afternoon session C. G. Netto, A. Ganesa Sankaran, P. Balasubramaniam, S. N. Theerthagiri, T. A. V. Nathan and others met separately to consider the future of the Justice Party. At that meeting they unanimously agreed to continue the Justice Party under its old name. A letter protesting against the undemocratic methods used at the conference to move the resolutions and silence the opposition was also addressed to Naicker. The letter, which was released to the press on 28 August 1944, reads as follows:

> We the undersigned beg to notify that the resolutions moved by you at the Confederation of the S. I. L. F. today changing the name of the party into Dravidar Kazhagam was (sic) to be deemed nullified as there was no proper notice and will not bind us. We therefore continue to be members of the S. I. L. F. (Justice Party).[3]

They subscribed on the spot 5,600 rupees to continue the party under its old name.[4] Soundrapandiyan, Rajan and many others supported them in reviving the Justice Party. But it did not survive long enough to make any impact on the political scene.

---

1 Interview with Balasubramaniam on 28 July 1969.

2 *Namatu Kurikkol*, p. 43, *Kudi Arasu*, 2 September 1944.

3 *Mail* and *Hindu*, 29 August 1944.

4 T. M. Parthasarathi, *D.M.K. Varalaru*, pp. 35-36; *Mail*, 29 August 1944.

CHAPTER—VI

THE DRAVIDIAN FEDERATION

1944 – 1949

THE DRAVIDIAN FEDERATION

After the inauguration of the Dravidian Federation or the Dravida Kazhagam (D. K.) in 1944, Ramasami Naicker claimed that there was little difference between the new organization and the Justice Party, but none of the prominent Justicites were prepared to accept his reasoning or cooperate with him to build a new organization. Even his close friends like Soundarapandiyan and Samiappa Mudaliar could not tolerate his dictatorial attitude and therefore they parted company with him after the Salem conference. Some of the articulate young men like K. M. Balasubramaniam, Viswanathan and others left politics for good, while others like P. Balasubramaniam, T. A. V. Nathan, Tirumalaiswami and Salem Rathinaswami rallied round Rajan in his attempt to revive the Justice Party, but without success. The only articulate young man who stood by Naicker and strengthened his hand was Annadurai. Along with him came a band of enthusiastic young men, determined to build a new party with the main political objective of attaining a separate country for the Dravidians. Apart from this objective, at least in Naicker's conception, the party was to be a social reform organization so that it could usher in an egalitarian Dravidian society.

The Kazhagam's social aims did attract some enthusiastic young men. But as its political objective was limited and opposed to the Congress concept of Indian nationalism, especially when the whole nation was imbued with that fervour, it was difficult for the Kazhagam to make an impact on the people. Faced with this disadvantage, Annadurai and his colleagues went about the Tamil districts preaching secession from the rest of India as a creed with missionary zeal, and indeed succeeded to some extent in their proselytizing. As a result of their work, within two years of the inauguration of the Kazhagam many new branches sprang up, membership increased remarkably and the party came to stay as a challenge to the Congress concept of Indian nationalism.

With the growth of the Kazhagam, Annadurai's influence also spread among a wide section of people in the Tamil districts. In contrast to Naicker, Annadurai drew his support both from the masses and from the enlightened section of the Tamil society,

especially from college students and the academics. They not only admired his talents, but also his writings, including dramas in which he himself acted. His histrionic ability and his winning manners won him many followers within the Kazhagam ranks and earned the envy of Naicker. This jealousy led him to restrain Annadurai's public activities and caused the latter's resentment. Gradually differences began to manifest themselves in manifold ways, even in running the party and in giving effect to its policies.

These differences came to a head on the eve of India's Independence Day celebrations on 15 August 1947 when Naicker and Annadurai took opposing views on the question of celebrating the occasion. With time these differences increased until finally Annadurai broke with Naicker when the latter married a lady much younger than himself in July 1949. Annadurai inaugurated the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam or the Dravidiān Progressive Federation a few months later in September that year.

Soon after the Salem confederation Naicker was faced with some unpleasant situations caused by his former colleagues in the Justice Party. Polemical attacks were frequently made in the press and on the platform against his encouragement of undesirable elements to dominate the general session of the confederation and his arbitrarily changing the name of the party. However Naicker not only summarily dismissed these accusations in a press statement issued on 10 September 1944, but also said that the party led by him alone should be regarded as the Justice Party, although its name had been changed according to the mandate given by the party members in August 1944.[1]

While Naicker was thus engaged in replying to his political opponents, his correspondence with Jinnah placed him in an embarassing position. We have seen how since 1940 Naicker had been endeavouring to form an anti-Congress front in the country with the help of the leaders of the Muslim League and the Scheduled Castes Federation and to canvass support for his demand for Dravidanad. He was not successful in forming an anti-Congress front, and the available records do not confirm whether or not the leaders of the Muslim League or of the Scheduled Castes Federation agreed to speak for the Dravidanad issue in their negotiations with

1 *Mail* and *Dravida Nadu*, 10 September 1944.

the British Government or with the leaders of the Indian National Congress.

In 1942, when the Cripps Mission had failed, Rajaji conceived a new plan to solve the impasse in forming a national government for India. The plan known as the 'C. R. formula' proposed to the AICC that a national government should be formed at the centre and that the Muslim demand for a separate Pakistan should be conceded.[1] Naicker who addressed several meetings in Trichinopoly district during this period criticized Rajaji for not taking into account the demand for Dravidasthan which according to the former was more important to South India than Pakistan. He said, however, that 'Rajaji's scheme was not to be condemned outright but might be worth considering.'[2] Though Rajaji's formula was rejected at the meeting of the Madras Congress Legislative Party on 23 April 1942[3] and subsequently by the AICC in May the same year,[4] Rajaji's policy throughout 1942-43 had been Congress-League accord and 'Back to Cripps'.[5] Gandhi however took the cue from the formula for the Hindu-Muslim accord, when Rajaji met him in prison in February 1943. Soon after his release in May 1944, Gandhi communicated to Jinnah his intention to negotiate with him on Rajaji plan for partitioning India on the basis of the Pakistan doctrine.[6]

When Gandhi's intentions came to be known Ramasami Naicker wrote a letter from Erode on 9 August 1944 to Jinnah, requesting him to treat both the Pakistan and the Dravidanad issue as one and negotiate with Gandhi on that basis:

> My dear Jinnah Sahib: I have been watching carefully the proceedings in connection with Rajagopalachariar's

1 NAI., *Government of India, Home Department, Political, File No.* 18/6/42 *Poll, (I) Fortnightly reports for the month of June* 1942; *D. O. letter from the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to E. Conran Smith, Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, D. O. No., p.* 4-2, 18 June 1942, p. 2.

2 Ibid.

3 *Mail* and *Hindu*, 24 April 1942

4 R. Coupland, *The Constitutional Problem of India*, Pt. II, pp. 288-89.

5 Nilkan S. Perumal, *Rajaji*, p. 57.

6 R. C. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, pp 694-95.

> formula, towards solving the deadlock .. Though I have no full hope, there are signs of a change as our opponents have come forward themselves to settle the Hindu-Muslim question .. Kindly excuse me for reminding you about our discussions relating to Pakistan and Dravidastan while we were at Madras and Delhi and your assurance that you would plead for both questions as one. Here in South India, I have considered both the questions as one, and done my best to solve the problem as far as possible..[1]

To this Jinnah wrote expressing his inability to speak on behalf of non-Brahmans in Madras although he had 'much sympathy' for them:

> Dear Mr Ramaswami: .. I have always had much sympathy for the people of Madras, 90 per cent of whom are non-Brahmans and if they desire to establish their Dravidastan, it is entirely for your people to decide on this matter.. I can say no more, and certainly I cannot speak on your behalf. I have made my position clear to you and to your colleagues when I was in Madras, more than once, but hitherto, I have noticed that in your activities you have been indecisive .. I can only speak for Muslim India but you have my assurance that wherever and whenever I have a say in the matter, you will find me supporting any just and fair claim or demand of any section of the people of India, and particularly the non-Brahmans of Southern India.[2]

Since Naicker depended so much on Jinnah's support this reply was a great setback for him. Consequently Naicker neither expressed any view on this nor informed the members of the party regarding the contents of the letter. However after the conclusion of the Confederation, Naicker chose to publish the last few lines of the letter to show that the demand had Jinnah's support.[3] When

---

1 'Ramasami Naicker's letter to Jinnah, dt. 9 August 1944', quoted in *Mail* 23 September 1944.

2 'Jinnah's letter to Ramasami Naicker, Dt. 17 August 1944', quoted in *Mail*, 23 September 1944.

3 *Kudi Arasu*, 10 September 1944.

his attention was drawn to the publication of the extracts of the correspondence in Madras papers, Jinnah released the entire correspondence for the information of the public so that there might be no 'misunderstanding on the matter'.[1]

The publication of the correspondence in the local press put Naicker in an awkward position, and shook him into the realization that political objectives could not be gained solely through external help, without a strong organization enjoying the support of a large segment of the people. As a result, a few days later a meeting of the prominent members of the Dravida Kazhagam was convened to consider steps to strengthen the party. According to the decision made at that meeting the membership fee was fixed at four annas, district secretaries were appointed specifically to recruit new members, and Annadurai was elected to co-ordinate their work and to publish weekly reports of the progress of the membership drive. Moreover the decision taken at the Salem confederation to recruit at least 10,000 new members for the Kazhagam by 31 March 1945 was reconfirmed.[2] For want of materials the total number of members in the Dravida Kazhagam in September 1944 is not clear. Some put it between 10,000 to 15,000[3] members while others estimate it as close to 50,000.[4] Although party records are not available to substantiate their claim, from October 1944 weekly figures are available to estimate the steady growth of the Kazhagam. The following Table XIV prepared by the writer shows this gradual monthly increase in its membership from 21 October 1944 to 22 September 1945.

1 *Mail*, 23 September 1944.

2 *Kudi Arasu*, 30 September 1944.

3 Interview with Vedachalam and Kanchi Kalyanasundaram on 27 July and 19 September 1969 respectively.

4 If later records are taken to account, this figure seems to be fictitious.

TABLE XIV

D. K. membership from October 1944 to September 1945

	21 Oct. 1944	18 Nov. 1944	23 Dec. 1944	20 Jan. 1945	24 Feb. 1945	24 Mar. 1945	28 Apr. 1945	26 May 1945	30 June 1945	28 July 1945	22 Aug. 1945	22 Sep. 1945
Chingleput	131	331	488	488	586	760	806	856	900	900	Details not given	Details not given
North Arcot	227	681	871	1,273	1,528	1,571	1,828	1,828	1,844	1,844		
South Arcot	491	1,146	1,349	1,472	1,617	1,638	1,802	1,877	1,919	1.919		
Salem	1,003	2,159	2,442	3,835	4,460	4,460	4,460	4,460	4,554	4,579		
Coimbatore	400	1,175	1,772	2,280	4,843	5,139	5,500	5,825	5,906	6,008		
Trichinopoly	1,024	2,234	2,928	3,626	3,801	3,886	3,886	3,886	3,985	4,236		
Tanjore	1,140	2,079	3,555	4.429	4,776	5.018	5,516	5,729	5,901	5,958		
Madura	224	588	851	1,097	1,298	1,353	1,432	1,456	1,456	1,481		
Ramnad	313	567	1,333	1,826	1,930	2,035	2,268	2,293	2,318	2,318		
Tinnevelly	525	575	1,141	1,809	1,886	2,011	2,089	2,114	2,125	2,270		
Madras	275	561	1,592	1,650	1,700	1,700	1,700	1,747	1,822	1,822		
Other than Tamil districts	12	56	245	352	385	385	415	456	480	480		
Total	5,765	12,152	18,567	24,137	28,810	29,956	31,702	32,527	33,210	33,815	33,947	33,984

Source: *Kudi Arasu*, 21 October 1944 to 22 September 1945.

From this table, the rate of increase in membership for the first five months was over 4,000. Indeed it reached its peak in December when the enrolment was as high as 6,418. But this phenomenal increase in membership did not continue for long, for in the subsequent months, it dropped to 1,146 and 1,581 in March and April respectively. After April it slumped to a further low level of a couple of hundreds and finally in September it was only a paltry 37. No satisfactory explanation can be offered for this sudden spurt of enthusiasm for the first few months and the lack of it in the subsequent months. In the first few months the party workers might have shown greater incentive which slackened considerably afterwards. Another possible explanation for the large number of members joining the Kazhagam up to February 1945 was the activities of the Dravidian Student Association and the Self-Respect Association which were inaugurated by Annadurai and Naicker, respectively, between October 1944 and January 1945.[1]

The Dravidian Student Association, which was started on Annadurai's initiative, held its first conference in Madura on 20 October 1944. This conference which was presided over by A. P. Janarthanam and addressed by Annadurai was attended by over 600 students' representatives and 1,000 visitors from all the colleges affiliated to the University of Madras. A large number of high school students also participated. At the conclusion of the conference a permanent central student secretariat with one Davamani Rajan as president was set up. Twelve secretaries representing various centres were also chosen to enrol members for the Dravidian Student Association. Members of this Association by virtue of its rules became the members of the D. K. also.[2]

Student participation in politics was not a new phenomenon in the Province of Madras. From the days of the non-cooperation movement the provincial Congress had encouraged this. As a result of the leaders' appeal many students had even discontinued their studies, and participated in various campaigns organized by the Indian National Congress. The Congress students' organization, known as the Youth Congress, played a dominant role in

1 *Kudi Arasu*, 18 November 1944 and 27 January 1945.

2 *Kudi Arasu*, 18 November 1944; T. M. Parthasarathi, *D. M. K. Varalaru*, p. 42.

1942 when Gandhi initiated his famous 'Quit India' movement. The Self-Respect movement and the Justice Party had had similar organizations since the 1920's, although they were mainly confined to big cities. Whether it was Congress or the Young Justice League, there was no central secretariat to co-ordinate the work of various district branches. Nor were there district secretaries as in the Dravidian Student Association. No full time secretary was appointed to look after the organizational work. Another distinctive feature of the Dravidian Student Association was that it had many branches at its very inception. The branches in Trichinopoly, Kumbakonam, Villupuram, Tiruvarur, Cuddalore, Madura, Ramnad, Salem, Annamalainagar, and Erode had long been very active.[1]

Among them the Annamalai University branch at Annamalainagar, the Tiruvarur branch at Tanjore and the branch in Madras city were prominent, for they were the chief centres of activity for the D. K. in the 1940's and later for the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (D. M. K.), the Dravidian Progressive Federation, in the 1950's. Some of the present D. M. K. Ministers including the Chief Minister, M. Karunanidhi, the Education Minister, V. R. Nedunchezhian, the Minister for Public Health, K. Anbazhagan and the former Speaker of Madras Legislative Assembly, K. A. Mathiazhagan had been active members in the Dravidian Student Association. The latter three were responsible for laying a strong foundation for its branch at Annamalai University.[2] M. Karunanidhi was an active student member of the Tiruvarur branch and distinguished himself by running a student magazine called *Murasoli*, now a leading Tamil daily in Madras.[3] The Madras city branch was conspicuous for conducting a free library, a reading room and a very successful debating society. Annadurai himself was its adviser, M. Varadarajan, a Professor of English from the Pachaiyappa's College, was its president and its legal adviser was Dr. A. Krishnaswamy. But the responsibility for running the branch efficiently and for spreading the D. K. message among the students

1 Interview with Asaithambi on 30 November 1969.

2 Interview with Rajagopal on 5 October 1969.

3 T. M. Parthasarathi, *D. M. K. Varalaru*, p. 42. Interview with Murasoli Maran on 5 August 1969.

rested with A. S. Venu, the general secretary.[1] Nevertheless the enthusiasm and interest in the activities of the D. K. among a section of the student population in the Tamil districts was kept alive by the forceful tongue and versatile pen of Annadurai. On account of his efforts the Dravidian Student Association became not only an important wing of the D. K. but also a power-base for himself.[2]

Naicker, on the other hand, obsessed with his phobia for Brahmans, tried to revive the Self-Respect movement under a slightly different name in January 1945 but retained all its old aims intact. The newly inaugurated Self-Respect Association in January 1945, though it differed from the defunct Self-Respect movement, aimed at publishing propaganda pamphlets, leaflets and books similar to those of the 1930's. In addition it planned to train full-time propagandists in order to carry the Self-Respect message to the masses and win them over to the D. K. The Association also planned to send its propagandists to other provinces and countries where the Tamils lived in large numbers. On account of its work in the early 1940's, many branches of this Association were started in the territories adjoining the Tamil districts, chiefly in Bangalore, Chittoor and Trivandrum, and also in countries like Ceylon, Burma, Malaya and Singapore.[3] Although this Association was not as popular as the Dravidian Student Association, it helped to a certain extent to train competent speakers in Tamil. Mostly these speakers imitated the oratorical style of Annadurai, for it was more eloquent, chaste and dignified than that of Naicker.[4]

On account of the activities of the two associations and the enthusiasm shown by the D. K. members, the membership drive was a great success. To keep up this zeal among the party workers, the leading members of the Kazhagam met on 12 August 1945 at Trichinopoly and decided to hold an annual confederation at the same place in September that year. To meet the expenses of the

1 T. M. Parthasarathi, *D. M. K. Varalaru*, p. 43. Interview with Sivagnanam on 10 September 1969.

2 Interview with Sivagnanam and Asaithambi on 10 September and 30 November 1969 respectively.

3 *Kudi Arasu*, 27 January 1969: Interview with Asaithambi on 10 September 1969.

4 Interview with Sivagnanam on 10 September 1969.

conference they also fixed fees of one and five rupees for the specially invited guests and the branch representatives respectively. The district branches were also asked to contribute a fixed amount as their share towards the expenses of the conference.[1] The following Table XV indicates the amount proposed for each district and the amount actually subscribed by them for conference expenses. It also indicates that the party had larger following in South Arcot, Coimbatore, Trichinopoly and Tanjore districts than in others.

TABLE XV

Statement of the amount proposed and the amount paid by district D. K. branches

Name of the District	Amount proposed (in Rupees)	Amount actually subscribed (in Rupees)
1. Madras City and Chingleput	1,500	370
2. North Arcot	500	697
3. South Arcot	1,500	1,029
4. Salem	1,500	981
5. Coimbatore	3,000	1,532
6. Trichinopoly	—	1,383
7. Tanjore	2,000	2,000
8. Madura	500	613
9. Ramnad	500	933
10. Tinnevelly	—	655
11. Other places	—	80
Total	11,000	10,273

Source: *Dravida Nadu*, 19 August 1945; *Kudi Arasu*, 8 December 1945.

The seventeenth confederation of the D. K., held at Trichinopoly on 29 and 30 September 1945 devoted itself mainly to the drafting of a constitution for the party. According to the newly framed constitution, the party was to be known as D. K. without retaining the name of the Justice Party as had been done since 1944. The

1 *Kudi Arasu*, 18 August 1945; *Dravida Nadu*, 19 August 1945.

main aims of the Kazhagam were to protect the land of the Dravidians from the social, economic and political exploitation of foreigners, primarily referring in this case to the Brahmans and the North Indians, and to work for the separation of Dravidanad from India. Membership was thrown open to all those who attained the age of 18, provided they subscribed to the party objectives.

The members of the executive committee of the Kazhagam would be elected each year at the time of annual confederation or in the event of postponement at a later date as agreed upon by its members. The members would include the leader of the party, two deputy leaders, two secretaries, one organizing secretary, three regional organizing secretaries, and 56 district representatives at the rate of two for each district, with the exception of Tanjore, Trichinopoly, Salem and Coimbatore which would each have four representatives, and five for the Madras city. The committee itself was vested with powers to nominate ten members and another ten could be nominated by the leader of the party if necessary.

Once in three months the committee was to hold a meeting and at least 15 members must be present at a meeting to have a quorum. The powers to implement the resolutions passed at the annual confederation, to constitute sub-committees, to frame rules and regulations for the party's successful functioning, to select candidates should the party decide to contest elections, to raise funds, and to look into other matters relating to the party were given to the executive committee.

Of the two secretaries one was to be responsible for the party administration and the other to be in charge of propaganda. The regional organizing secretaries were given full powers to enrol new members within their respective regions, and the organizing secretary was to co-ordinate their work and present periodical reports to the executive committee.

The leader of the party in consultation with the chairman of the executive committee and the secretaries could take any urgent decisions, but these should later be approved by the executive committee.[1]

---

[1] *Kudi Arasu*, 29 September 1945; *Dravida Nadu*, 7 October 1945; *Namatu Kurikkol*, pp. 44-48.

Despite all these elaborate rules for the constitution and functioning of the executive committee, supreme powers were vested in the hands of the working committee. It consisted of 24 members of the executive committee, including its chairman, secretaries and the treasurer. The members of the working committee were not elected from among the executive members but were all nominated by the leader of the party. All decisions taken by the committee would be treated as if they were decided by members of the executive committee.[1]

The rules governing the election of the party leader were vague. But on the following day at the general session this part of the constitution was amended so as to make Ramasami Naicker the permanent leader of the party. Later, at the meeting of the working committee, the amendment was formally moved by Annadurai in the form of a resolution which was accepted unanimously. This put an end to any speculation as to a change of leadership in the future and Naicker was thereby given virtual absolute powers to run the party as he wished.[2]

On this occasion another important decision was also taken, to form a militia, known as the Dravidian Freedom Force, under the aegis of the Kazhagam. The force was to be its permanent wing, consisting of full time workers who would take orders only from the leader of the party. The avowed aim in starting this new wing was to fight for the liberation of the Dravidian country.[3]

A fortnight later on 10 October 1945 the Dravidian Freedom Force was officially inaugurated by Naicker. On that occasion the members of the Dravidian Force were given black shirts as their uniforms, to signify the 'general down-trodden condition of the Dravidians in society'. They also took a pledge that unless the conditions of the Dravidians were ameliorated they would not adopt any other uniform except the black shirt. On the inaugural day about 150 members took this solemn pledge.[4]

---

1 *Namatu Kurikkol*, p. 45.

2 *Kudi Arasu*, 29 September 1945; *Dravida Nadu*, 7 October 1945.

3 *Namatu Kurikkol*, p. 57; *Kudi Arasu*, 6 October 1945; *Dravida Nadu*, 7 October 1945.

4 *Kudi Arasu*, 13 October 1945; *Dravida Nadu*, 21 October 1945. Interview with Vedachalam on 27 July 1969.

In October 1945, an appeal was made in *Kudi Arasu* appealing for full time workers to join Freedom Force. It was signed by E. V. K. Sampath, the nephew of Naicker and S. Karunanandam, the temporary organizers appointed on the inauguration day.[1] Details are wanting as to how many responded to this and actually joined as full time members.

The inauguration of the Dravidian Freedom Force, which very soon came to be known as the Black Shirt movement after the uniform worn by its members, created some apprehension among a section of the public. The Brahmans were the first to express concern and fear.[2] The members of the Tamilnad Congress ridiculed the movement as one organized to promote 'violence as a cult' in politics.[3] The newspapers in general were highly critical and called on the government to deal firmly with any militant organization which preached hatred and violence as a policy in the body politic.[4]

On gauging the adverse reaction of the public Naicker came out with a lengthy explanation of the purpose and aim of the Black Shirt movement. In this he denied the suggestion that the movement was a militant organization aimed at realizing its objectives by force. Nor was it an extremist organization directed at any particular group, community or race in society. Its real object, according to Naicker, was to show that a group of Dravidians, having realized their inferior position in society, had organized themselves under a leader only to better their condition. To achieve this mission they were even prepared to sacrifice their lives if that was necessary.[5]

As Naicker was preoccupied with his newly organized Black Shirt movement, Annadurai and others were keen on organizing the Kazhagam into a strong opposition party that could be a

---

1 *Kudi Arasu*, 13 October 1945. Interview with Sivagnanam on 10 September 1969.

2 *Swadesamitran*, 25 October 1945; M. R. O., *Public, Home, G.O. No.* 1481, 18 June 1948.

3 Ibid., 27 October 1945; M. R. O., *Public, Home, G. O. No.* 2161, 2 September 1948.

4 *Dinamani*, 29 October 1945; *Swadesamitran*, 30 October 1945.

5 *Kudi Arasu*, 17 November 1945; *Dravida Nadu*, 18 November 1945; M.R.O., *Public, Home, G. O. No.* 2857, 19 November 1948.

check on the Congress and an alternative party to administer the province. This view was further strengthened when the Congress swept the polls in the central legislative assembly election held in December 1945.[1] On 16 December the executive committee of the D.K. met to consider the rapid political changes in the country and to deliberate on the future programme of work. At this meeting it was decided that no election should be contested until the Kazhagam had built up a strong organization. Nevertheless, the other decisions indicate that the ultimate aim of the ambitious young men led by Annadurai, though not of Naicker, was to contest elections as soon as possible. On their insistence the committee agreed to issue an appeal to all district branches, to recruit new members so that the total membership could reach 100,000 in a few years. Furthermore they decided to raise a fund of about 50,000 rupees a year, probably with a view to participate in the elections.[2] At a subsequent meeting held on 20 January 1946 not only were the same resolutions passed with some modifications but also a fresh directive was issued to the district branches that they should each enrol at least 10,000 new members as early as possible. At the same time a new post was created in the party, known as the general secretary, in order to coordinate the work of the other secretaries, and to this Annadurai was appointed.[3]

As the general secretary, Annadurai's main concern was that the Kazhagam's influence should spread to the greater part of the Tamil country, not merely the backward non-Brahman communities and the members of the scheduled castes, but the educated youths, the professionals and even the privileged communities. He thought this could not be accomplished by public meetings alone, for, very few of the members of the privileged communities attended them. Among a section of the upper castes a general apathy towards the activities of the Kazhagam prevailed. Even those who were politically articulate had an aversion to Naicker's politics. On the other hand, Naicker made no attempt either through his speeches or his newspapers to win their sympathy and support. In fact he cared very little for the

1 *Kudi Arasu*, 22 December 1945.

2 *Kudi Arasu*, 29 December 1945; *Dravida Nadu*, 30 December 1945.

3 *Kudi Arasu*, 26 January 1945; *Dravida Nadu*, 27 January 1945.

educated or the privileged classes, because his mission, as exemplified in his own activities, was to educate the down-trodden and oppressed section of the Tamil community.[1]

This objective was no doubt appreciated by Annadurai and others, yet they thought that Naicker's message did not receive the attention it should from a very large section of the community. So they took upon themselves the mission to propagate ideals of the Kazhagam not only on the platform but through the mass media, the press and the cinema.[2]

The Kazhagam had two newspapers, a daily, *Viduthalai*, and a weekly, *Kudi Arasu*. Both had very limited circulation and even in their heyday, it did not exceed 10,000 or 15,000 copies each. Considering the Kazhagam's hold on the masses in the 1940's this was by no means encouraging. Several reasons can be suggested. In the first instance a large number of members and supporters of the D.K. for economic reasons could not afford individually to buy a daily or a weekly, so five or ten persons subscribed collectively. In villages small reading rooms were started by the local Kazhagam members who purchased the party papers, and they were invariably read by the entire village. As Murasoli Maran, one of the D.M.K. members puts it, one *Viduthalai* or *Dravidanadu* would be read at least by 20 persons in a village. He told how in his school days he cycled from his village to the nearest town, Kumbakonam, which was about four miles away, to buy some of the Kazhagam papers and these were read avidly by 30 and odd people.[3] The story was not very different in the towns. In the 1940's at least four or five small reading rooms, where the Kazhagam papers were bought and read, were started in each locality. At Mylapore, one of the divisions in the Madras city, over ten such reading rooms existed. Due to economic factors, the paper's circulation was low but the readership was at least ten or fifteen times greater.[4]

---

1 Interview with Rajagopal and Vedachalam on 5 October and 27 July 1969 respectively.

2 Interview with Kanchi Kalyanasundaram and Rajagopal on 19 September and 5 October 1969 respectively.

3 Interview with Murasoli Maran on 5 August 1969.

4 Interview with R. Selvaraj on 8 October 1969.

Secondly, both *Viduthalai* and *Kudi Arasu* covered very little general news other than information relating to the party, and therefore those who could afford it preferred other newspapers. Thirdly, party papers, despite their limitations, could still be edited more thoughtfully, giving some consideration to the general readership. But as these papers were run by Naicker they were rather projections of himself than party papers. His speeches, his tours and the functions he attended were drably reported in several columns without proper editing. Other interesting speeches made by leaders such as Alagiriswamy, Ponnambalanar or for that matter Annadurai were occasionally published in full. As a former leader of the D. K. pointed out, both the papers were run by Naicker, for Naicker and for the benefit of Naicker alone.[1]

In 1942, when Annadurai had established some standing in the Justice Party, he started the Tamil weekly *Dravida Nadu.* It was launched with grave disadvantages, for he had neither financial resources nor help from affluent party members. To overcome this difficulty Annadurai formed the 'Kāñchipuram Drāvida Naḍigar Kazhagam' (Kāñchipuram Dramatists' Society) with the help of his friends and through this society he staged his first play called 'Chandrodayam' in 1942.[2]

Annadurai wrote the script of the play and his friends, who had had little or no previous experience, were the chief actors. Annadurai was no exception, yet he took a leading role in the play. With all these shortcomings when the play was staged at one of the Justice conferences in 1942, not only was it well attended but also it received favourable comments from those experienced in the dramatic field.[3] Emboldened by this success, he staged the play subsequently at other Justice Party and D.K. conferences and also in all the important towns in the Tamil districts.

'Chandrodayam', despite its success as a stage play, cannot be considered great as literature, even when compared with some of Annadurai's later works, which are regarded as masterpieces.

1 Interview with a prominent ex-leader of the D. K. who wishes to be anonymous for some years.

2 Interview with Rajagopal on 5 October 1969.

3 Ibid.

What he set out to achieve was the employment of a literary genre to popularize some of the reforming ideas advanced by the D.K. in an entertaining and impressive way, and in this he was highly successful. Vanchinatha Sastri, one of the main characters in the play is drawn as a villain and as a representative of what Annadurai considered as Brahmanism. As an old priest in a zamin temple, he wields enormous power with the zamindar and his subjects. Using this advantageous position he contrives a plot by which he can deprive the zamindar of his wealth and position in society. In contrast to this character is Durairaj, the leader of the local rationalist society, who misses no opportunity to ridicule caste, Vanchinatha Sastri and his young wife's amorous activities. Durairaj is charged with a fictitious theft, but Vanchinatha Sastri helps him to escape with a stern warning not to enter the zamin estate to meddle with his plans. Vexed with his failure, Durairaj wanders aimlessly and involves himself in a treacherous plot to overthrow the Head of a Saiva religious *math*, and aids the plotters to succeed in their scheme for a share in their spoils. He returns a rich man, with the pseudonym Mayendran, only to find the zamindar swindled out of his wealth and his only daughter widowed after a marriage to an aged zamindar arranged by Vanchinatha Sastri for money. Thereafter Durairaj addresses himself to exposing the priest's treachery and villainy to the zamindar. He succeeds in this mission and frees the zamindar from slavery to Brahmanical ideas. To prove his reformation he agrees to give his widowed daughter in re-marriage to one of Durairaj's friends, who has been in love with her. The hero, Durairaj, himself commits suicide to escape prison for his role in dispossessing the Head of the Saiva *math* of his wealth and position.[1]

This is an allegorical play in which Tamilnad is portrayed as a rich land where the leader and the people are slaves to the cultural ideas of Brahmans. To liberate them from this domination comes Ramasami Naicker in the person of Durairaj in the play with his message of rationalism.

Whether the audience understood this allegorical import or not, they were no doubt made to contemplate and accept the

1 Annadurai, *Chandrodayam* (Madurai, 1957), pp. 5-60.

obvious truth that religion as practised and religious institutions as they functioned in society do not have their self-proclaimed sanctity or infallibility, because those who practise religion and run the institutions are mere human beings given to human imperfections. The priest Vanchinatha Sastri and the Head of the Saiva *math* in the play are purposely painted in the blackest dye so that the illiterate and semi-illiterate masses who witnessed the play could understand that those who practise religion are in no way superior and that religion like other things is but a vocation and a special prerogative of Brahmans in society. This message could not have gone deeper among the common people in a land which had given birth to and nourished for over twelve hundred years the *Bhakti* movement, which is still a strong force among the Tamils.

Born in a Saivite family, Annadurai was aware of the heavy odds against which he was fighting. In the earlier days of his political career, the play 'Chandrodayam' succeeded to some extent in putting across the D.K. views and at the same time provided him with a regular source of income to run his weekly. He collected, for example, a net amount of 3,654.50 rupees for a performance at Erode on 19 November 1943.[1] For the performance a year later on 14 September 1944 at Tiruvarur the net income was 2,863.87 rupees as per the balance sheet published

1 *Dravida Nadu*, 5 December 1943.

in *Kudi Arasu* on 14 October 1944.[1] According to C. V. Rajagopal, one of the actors in the play, the tickets were moderately priced from two annas to one rupee, depending on the type of theatre. If the income shown in the Table under footnote is any indication of the popularity of the play, at least 8,000 to 10,000 persons should have normally attended it. Consequently the play not only provided a regular source of income for Annadurai to offset the acute financial difficulties in running a weekly, but increased his personal popularity among the Kazhagam workers and the public as well.[2]

By 1945 Annadurai's *Dravida Nadu* fairly overcame its financial difficulties. Though supposed to be a party paper, less than 20 per cent of its columns were devoted to party news; this compared strikingly with its contemporary, *Kudi Arasu.* The former was more interestingly edited and contained not only news about

---

1 *Balance sheet of income and expenditure for staging the play 'Chandrodayam' at Tiruvarur on* 14 *September* 1944

Items of income and expenditure	Income in Rupees	Expenditure in Rupees	Balance in Rupees
1. Collection through friends	1,838.00		
2. Collection made by Annadurai	500.00		
3. Collection through sale of tickets	2,232.50		
Total	4,570.50		
4. Travel expenses		601.00	
5. Boarding and lodging		229.08	
6. Entertainment tax		446.82	
7. Rent for the theatre		109.50	
8. Publicity		97.83	
9. Other incidental expenses		222.40	
Total		1,706.63	
Total income			4,570.50
Total expenditure			1,706.63
Balance			2,863.87

2 Interview with Rajagopal on 5 October 1969.

party affairs, but also an editorial on some current issue of public interest, an interpretative article on national or international politics, a short story and a serial novel. This format was normally not changed except on special occasions like annual conferences or other events of political importance. The issues of *Kudi Arasu,* on the other hand, generally contained one of Naicker's speeches, an account of his tour programmes, an editorial invariably written by Naicker himself, some news items either on provincial or all-India political events but seldom on world politics, and full coverage of party meetings and functions held throughout the districts. No short story or serial novel ever appeared in its columns. Therefore *Dravida Nadu* had attractions to offer to the general public as well as to the party members. Small wonder that the 16-page, closely printed *Dravida Nadu* starting with about 2,000 saleable copies a week in 1942, rose to 12,000 in 1945.[1] whereas the circulation of *Kudi Arasu* at that time, some consider, did not exceed 6,000 or 7,000 copies a week. Even this progressively decreased and by early 1947 it ceased publication.[2]

Kudi Arasu's readership was confined only to the party workers and sympathizers, while *Dravida Nadu* had a wider readership because of Annadurai's writings, chiefly his short stories and serial novels. Though no records are available to assess the actual circulation of these two weeklies during this period, field work conducted by the writer revealed some interesting facts which correspond more or less to the views expressed by party members during his interviews.

The following Tables XVI and XVII are prepared on the basis of the sample survey done by the writer in ten of the postal divisions in the city of Madras. The first four among the ten divisions in the Tables are in the North Madras area and the rest are in the South. In each division, although 300 odd persons in the age group of 40 to 50 were interviewed; the samples are here reduced by about one third to 100 to show percentages. Other samples are similarly reduced. Women were purposely not interviewed because very few of them in this age group are interested in politics.

1 Ibid.

2 Interview with Vedachalam on 27 July 1969.

TABLE XVI

Readership of Kudi Arasu in 1944-46 in the city of Madras

Name of the postal division	No. of persons inter-viewed	No. of readers	Type of readership: High School and college educated	Type of readership: Others with lesser educational attainments
1. George Town	100	5	—	5
2. Washerman-pet	100	20	2	18
3. Rayapuram	100	18	2	16
4. Vepery	100	16	3	13
5. Royapettah	100	10	1	9
6. T.Nagar	100	2	—	2
7. Saidapet	100	7	—	7
8. Mylapore	100	10	3	7
9. Triplicane	100	2	—	2
10. Cathedral	100	6	—	2
Total	1,000	96	11	81

TABLE XVII

Readership of Dravida Nadu in 1944-46 in the city of Madras

Name of the postal division	No. of persons interviewed	No. of readers	Type of readership: High School and college educated	Type of readership: Others with lesser educational attainments
1. George Town	100	12	4	8
2. Washermanpet	100	30	9	21
3. Rayapuram	100	20	7	13
4. Vepery	100	22	10	12
5. Royapettah	100	15	7	8
6. T.Nagar	100	15	9	6
7. Saidapet	100	14	7	7
8. Mylapore	100	18	10	8
9. Triplicane	100	18	11	7
10. Cathedral	100	14	4	10
Total	1,000	178	78	100

Source: Based on the sample survey done by me in 1969. See Appendix 8 for the questionnaire.

The results of the interview indicate that the readership of *Kudi Arasu* and *Dravida Nadu* were 9.6 and 17.8 per cent respectively in 1944-46. Out of this, high school and college educated readers of *Kudi Arasu* were about 11 per cent and of *Dravida Nadu* about 44 per cent. In both cases the readership in four postal divisions in North Madras is more than the six divisions in the South. This indicates that the Kazhagam drew its support in the 1940's more from the North Madras area than from the South. Presumably this was because of the preponderance of lower middle-class and labour class families in the former area. Another interesting feature is that those who bought *Kudi Arasu* invariably purchased *Dravida Nadu* also. But the reverse did not happen.

The popularity of *Dravida Nadu* among the people emboldened others to start separate weeklies of their own, not merely for profit, but also to enlarge the membership of the D.K. In their efforts they had the support and encouragement of Annadurai. N. V. Natarajan's *Dravidan*, T. M. Parthasarathi's *Tamil Ulagam*, Nedunchezhian's *Manram* and Anbazhagan's *Puduvalvu* were some other notable weeklies[1] which carried not only the message of Naicker but also the speeches of Annadurai. He also contributed short stories, one-act plays and political essays to them which served the double purpose of increasing both their circulation and his own popularity among the readers.

Not content with his success in Tamil journalism, Annadurai with the help of his friends started what was then called the Dravida Eluttalar Kazhagam, Dravidian Writers Forum, in December 1945 in Madras City, with the aim of encouraging non-Brahmans to write in Tamil. The Forum was headed by S. Gurusami, the then editor of *Viduthalai*, but the moving force behind it was undoubtedly Annadurai. He encouraged all those who had the urge to say something and the inclination to give it literary expression to contribute articles, poems, plays and even novels, not only to his own weekly but also to others. As a result there was a tremendous burst of literary activity, such as rarely witnessed in Tamilnad before.[2]

---

1 T. M. Parthasarathi, *D. M. K. Varalaru*, p. 41.

2 T. M. Parthasarathi, *D. M. K. Varalaru*, pp. 40-41.

Their creative writings though they are by no means great literary works, undoubtedly created a new kind of literature with a message, merit and value of its own. Many critics condemned the Kazhagam writers for debasing art by propaganda but they succeeded nevertheless in showing that even propaganda could be raised to the level of literature provided it was given a literary form and expressed with emotion and imagination. They used literary forms merely as a medium to convey their message more effectively and convincingly than before.[1] Employing literary art for political propaganda was not a novelty in the Tamil country. The members of the TNCC had done this before with success in the early phase of the freedom struggle,[2] though their effort had not created a body of new readers nor encouraged their readers in turn to participate in creative activity. The D. K. writers were able to do this, with great success.[3]

From 1945 onwards the large body of new readers drawn mostly from the poor and the lower middle-class groups provided a rich market for exploitation not only by the D. K. writers but by others as well. Hence Annadurai and later M. Karunanidhi were materially benefited. Several editions of Annadurai's novels, short stories, collected essays and speeches were sold. For example his first novel, entitled *Parvathi B. A.*, which appeared in his weekly as a serial from 17 October 1943 to 4 March 1945, has sold over 100,000 copies so far.[4]

Among this new body of readers emerged a group of intelligent young men who not only admired Annadurai's style of writing and speaking but imitated it with an extraordinary degree of success. This style, which came to be popularly known as Annadurai style, was noted for its cadence achieved by the skilful use of alliteration.

---

1 Interview with Professor M. Varadarajan on 6 December 1969.

2 During the early phase of the freedom struggle, T. K. Pavalar, a member of the TNCC wrote a number of Dramas like *Katarin Verri* (The Success of Khaddar), and *Teciyakkoti* (The National Flag), with the 'motive of emphasizing the fight for national freedom' and acted them to the acclamation of the audience of that period. T. P. Meenakshisundaran, *A History of Tamil Literature* (Annamalaingar, 1965), p. 186.

3 Interview with Professor Varadarajan on 6 December 1969.

4 Interview with Murasoli Maran and Rajagopal, on 5 August and 5 October 1969 respectively.

Sentences were at times incredibly long, but in such cases they would be followed in quick succession by short sentences of precision and terseness. Notable among those who followed this style were M. Karunanidhi, T. K. Srinivasan, Rama Arangannal and A. K. Velan.[1] They in turn became leading members of the D. K. and followers of Annadurai. If these talented men were drawn into the field of public activity and the fold of Kazhagam, it was undoubtedly due to the literary activities of Annadurai in the 1940's.

With such impressive achievements in the literary field Annadurai ventured into the domain of the cinema to disseminate the Kazhagam's doctrines through this medium. In 1945 he wrote the story and the film script for the picture 'Velaikkari', (Maid-Servant) and the film was a great success because of its heterodox theme, scintillating humour, striking dialogue and superb acting. It was shown simultaneously to packed houses for about 100 to 150 days in about 80 centres throughout the Tamil districts. The capacity of a theatre varied from 900 to 1,200. To put it in the words of S. V. Sampath Kumar, the sub-editor of a leading monthly film magazine *Pesumpadam*,

> Velaikkari heralded a new era in the Tamil film world, for it excelled in all respects: story, script and acting. Annadurai's film-script largely contributed to the phenomenal success of the film. With him started a new style of script writing which abounds in alliteration, exotic rhythm and pun - all achieved with the use of simple, day-to-day spoken Tamil. Annadurai and his followers were then the only politicians who comprehended the potentiality of the film medium and exploited it to the maximum to spread their political doctrine subtly through effortlessly among the masses. Their link with the film industry catapulted them to power within 18 years of inaugurating the D. M. K.*[2]

---

1 The former Chief Minister of the Tamil Nadu Government, M. Karunanidhi is a writer of standing in Tamil. At first he made his mark as a script writer, but later as a poet, an essayist and a novelist. (2) Some critics consider T. K. Srinivasan as one of the leading short story writers in Tamil. (3) Rama Arangannal and A. K. Velan made a name as script writers for films.

2* Interview with S. V. Sampath Kumar on 10 December 1969.

Annadurai made yet another experiment in interpreting and explaining the culture of the Tamils as embodied in the *Sangam* classics, a body of literature written in the early centuries of the Christian era. The exposition of these classics for the common man had been attempted earlier by T. V. Kalyanasundaram, to light the torch of nationalism. Annadurai, Anbazhagan and Nedunchezhian in that order used the same classics to kindle Tamil nationalism by harping on the past glory portrayed in them.[1] Moreover they not only popularized the *Tirukkural*, the non-sectarian ethical work, but even developed a cult of it. Since Annadurai's entry into politics this had become a bible for the members of the D. K.[2] Due to their literary interests, many Tamil scholars either became party members or staunch supporters of the Kazhagam.

If, through Annadurai's literary interests, the Kazhagam attracted the support of a number of scholars, his histrionic talents brought into its fold many actors of film fame. The chief among them were N. S. Krishnan, the notable Tamil comedian often characterized as the Charlie Chaplin of the Tamil films, and later K. R. Ramaswami and others. Thus Annadurai's manifold activities had drawn the support of a number of academics, actors, writers, dramatists, journalists, and students, as well as the public, whose support had been lacking until he entered politics as the leader of the D. M. K. and contested the elections.[3] In 1945-6 his popularity helped to recruit more members and this can be seen by the success of the second phase of the membership drive undertaken from February 1946 onwards.

The following Table XVIII prepared by the writer, indicates that over a period of six months the membership increased from 33,984 to 37,883 by March 1946. As before more new recruits came from Salem, Coimbatore, Trichinopoly and Tanjore districts than from others. The last two districts are known for their orthodoxy and for the affluence of Brahman and non-Brahman landowners on the one hand, and the poor agricultural labourers on the other. In social ranking also they held no position of admiration for most of them were untouchables. Therefore, this socially and

1 Interview with Professor Varadarajan on 6 December 1969.

2 Interview with K. M. Balasubramaniam on 28 July 1969.

3 Interview with Rajagopal on 5 October 1969.

TABLE XVIII

D. K. Membership from September 1945 *to July* 1946

Name of the district	22 Sep. 1945	30 Mar. 1946	27 Apr. 1946	1 June 1946	29 June 1946	20 July 1946
1. Chingleput		950	950	1,000	1,025	1,025
2. North Arcot		2,104	3,022	3,423	3,538	3,738
3. South Arcot		2,206	2,231	2,531	2,553	2,566
4. Salem		6,272	6,983	7,991	8,256	8,313
5 Coimbatore		6,096	6,164	6,190	6,459	7,015
6. Trichinopoly		4,518	5,039	5,496	5,546	5,546
7. Tanjore		6,440	7,027	7,503	7,828	8,078
8. Madura		1,556	1,687	1,809	2,042	2,042
9. Ramnad		2,520	2,633	2,883	3,515	3,565
10. Tinnevelly		2,423	3,423	3,488	3,548	3,548
11. Madras City		2,245	2,858	3,088	3,232	3,232
12. Other places		553	619	815	879	906
Total	33,984	37,883	42,636	46,217	48,421	49,574

Source: *Kudi Arasu*, 22 September 1945 to 20 July 1946.

economically oppressed group rallied round the D. K., for the Congress was dominated by orthodox and landed interests. As Coimbatore was the home district of Naicker, his personal influence was partly responsible for the large number of members joining the D. K. As it was the industrial centre of the presidency most of the industrial labourers gave their support to the party. Salem district's support from Kazhagam was probably due to its relatively economic backwardness. The southern most districts of Madura, Ramnad and Tinnevelly were strong centres of the Congress and made poor response to the D. K. membership drive. The same reason may hold good for the other Tamil districts. Within four months this figure shot up to 49,574, an increase of over 11,000 members, and this phenomenal increase cannot be accounted for, unless one takes into consideration Annadurai's personal initiative in more than one field. The same trend might not have continued, yet Vedachalam puts the membership of the D. K. at over 100,000 in 1949.[1] This total cannot be verified for want of proper records. However some D. M. K. leaders consider this figure as the most probable one, since they affirm that at the time of the split in September 1949 over 50,000 members followed Annadurai to form the new party.[2]

As the membership drive was more than encouraging, Annadurai and others hoped that Naicker would utilize this progressive trend to consolidate the party on sound democratic lines. Then it could function as a suitable opposition party outside the Legislature, in the light of its decision not to contest elections. Moreover, as the Congress emerged victorious in the general election held at the end of the Second World War in 1946, capturing about 77 per cent or 165 out of 215 seats in the Madras legislature and subsequently in May of that year formed the ministry with T. Prakasam as Prime Minister,[3] this need for a strong opposition at least outside the legislature was keenly felt.

The executive committee of the D. K., which met a fortnight before the announcement of the personnel of the Congress cabinet, decided unanimously to function as an opposition to the Congress

1 Interview with Vedachalam on 27 July 1969.

2 Interview with Asaithambi on 30 November 1969.

3 *Hindu* and *Mail*, 29 April 1946.

outside the legislature. This decision raised some hopes in the younger members, led by Annadurai, that Naicker would give them a free hand in reorganizing the party with a view to contest the elections at a future date.[1] Their expectations were strengthened further when at a subsequent meeting held on 20 April 1946 the committee decided to fight tooth and nail any move by the Congress to re-introduce compulsory Hindi in schools.[2] Furthermore, to emphasize the difference between the former Justice Party and the D. K., a flag was also adopted. It was a black flag with a red circle in the centre: the black representing the Dravidians' ignominious condition, the red emphasizing the D. K. members determination to ameliorate this condition through social and political changes.[3]

But these expectations were dashed when Naicker threw the decisions of the executive committee overboard and made a new policy statement at the first provincial Black Shirt conference held at Madura in May 1946. At that conference he said that the main objective and future work of the Kazhagam should be to remove the social inequalities and disabilities of the Dravidians, and that this could not be achieved except by revolution.[4] He neither defined the type of revolution he had in mind nor suggested the manner of bringing it about in the light of the anticipated far-reaching constitutional changes in the country. But, towards the end of this speech he hinted that he was determined to give a militant character to the Black Shirt movement and use it as a weapon to bring about radical changes in society.[5] As this speech was so provocative some of the militant Congressmen in Madura in collusion with some anti-social elements planned to disturb the second day of the proceedings. When this failed, they set fire to the conference *pandal* and the second day's session ended in utter confusion.[6] The Congress Government, which was waiting for an opportunity to crush the militant wing of the Kazhagam, banned the Black Shirt movement within a few days of the Madura incident,

1 *Kudi Arasu*, 13 April 1946; *Dravida Nadu*, 14 April 1946.

2 *Kudi Arasu*, 27 April 1946; *Dravida Nadu*, 28 April 1946.

3 Ibid.

4 Interview with Vedachalam on 27 July 1969.

5 *Kudi Arasu*, 25 May 1949.

6 T. M. Parthasarathi, *D. M. K. Varalaru*, p. 44.

but the ban was removed later because of agitation led by the members of D. K.[1]

Annadurai and his colleagues regarded Naicker's policy statement as symptomatic of his intention to run the D. K. more as an 'interest group' in politics to protect sectional interests than as a political party for the larger interests of the whole society. Others considered his statements as a mere reflection of his own mental make up, for he could not run a party without occasionally making sensational speeches. Still others, although not Annadurai, believed that Naicker was a 'destructive type' who would neither allow others to develop and run the party on democratic lines nor do it himself.[2]

This third view was gradually strengthened, at first by Naicker's interference in the affairs of the Dravidian Student Association, which had been functioning efficiently as a distinct wing of the party. Not only were its activities expanded but also its membership was increased to about 15,000, establishing branches in most of the towns in the Tamil districts. Naicker, who was greatly suspicious of Annadurai's political ambitions, thought that the association was a power base for him and that he should bring it under his direct control. His efforts in that direction only brought about a confrontation with the student leaders, which was later resolved rather uneasily through the timely intervention of Annaduari. As a result of this embarrassment Naicker's influence over them was on the wane.[3]

Secondly, in June 1946, Naicker caused another sensation, this time among his own party men, by declaring that every one of them should wear the black shirt as their uniform. The first resistance to this command came from the members of the Dravidian Student Association who were also the members of D. K. Annadurai himself refused to comply with Naicker's command and argued that the uniform was intended primarily for the volunteers of the Black Shirt movement and not for others, much less for the student

1 Ibid., p. 45.

2 Interview with Vedachalam and Kanchi Kalyanasundaram on 27 July and 19 September 1969 respectively.

3 Interview with Kanchi Kalyanasundaram and Asaithambi on 19 September and 30 November 1969 respectively. T. M. Parthasarathi, *D. M. K. Varalaru* p.43.

members and the office bearers in the D. K. He contended that this command would mean the ultimate merger of D. K. with the Black Shirt movement.[1]

But Naicker overruled them. He insisted that, whether they were members of the Black Shirt movement or not, all who professed to be members of the D. K. should wear the black shirt. His insistence led to a rift between Naicker and Annadurai.[2]

This rift was worsened when Annadurai raised a sum of 25,000 rupees on his own initiative to offer as a gift to the notable Tamil poet Bharati Dasan, the disciple of Bharati as he chose to call himself. Annadurai considered it as a duty to honour him, not because he was a poet of standing but because he was then the one poet who echoed the Kazhagam political and social doctrines and as a result of that suffered material loss and chill penury. But to Naicker this was yet another of Annadurai's efforts to build up his own image in the guise of honouring a Tamil poet. Consequently, Naicker not only boycotted the function held to honour Bharati Dasan on 26 June 1946, but made some uncharitable remarks which were considered unworthy of a political leader.[3]

Until August 1947 the rift between Annadurai and Naicker remained dormant. In the first week of August, Naicker, as usual without any consultation with the members of the working committee or the general secretary, declared that the members of the Kazhagam should boycott the Independence Day celebrations scheduled to be held on the 15th, because he believed that political power would pass from the hands of the British, but not to the Dravidians, who would continue to be vassals under the Āryan Baniyas, and therefore it was not an occasion for rejoicing but one for mourning.[4] Moreover, he urged his followers to arrange public meetings between 9 and 12 August so that they could explain to the people the reasons for boycotting the Independence Day celebrations. The opposition to Naicker's stand came from Annadurai, who wrote a 12-page letter in *Dravida Nadu* on 10 August 1947 explaining the reasons why the members of the D. K. should take part in the celebrations.

1 Interview with Rajagopal, 5 October 1969.

2 Ibid. Interview with Kanchi Kalyanasundaram on 19 September 1969.

3 T. M. Parthasarathi, *D. M. K. Varalaru*, p. 43; A. Maraimalaiyan, *Perarinar Annavin Peruvaralaru*, pp. 161-65.

4 *Viduthalai*, 5 August 1947.

In his letter Annadurai contended that in the freedom struggle not only the Āryans but such illustrious Dravidians as Tiruppur Kumaran and V. O. Chidambaram Pillai had also participated, and for that reason the members of the Dravida Kazhagam, despite their reservations, should participate in this memorable occasion. Secondly, if Naicker's arbitrary decision was implicitly followed, it would only damage the present image of the Kazhagam among other Dravidians of different political views, for they would consider that the Kazhagam, despite its pretensions of opposing the British for the past three years, was infact a quisling party. Furthermore Annadurai reasoned that 'it would not be proper to ignore or to measure the great event, that would be watched keenly by the entire world, by the yardstick of Kazhagam's principles alone'. And therefore he made an appeal.

> August 15 is the only day and the last day given to the members of the Kazhagam to prove publically that they in their life time repudiated British colonialism, advocated complete independence for India and that they are neither slaves nor quislings as has been charged by the Congress. Why should we miss this opportunity and earn lasting infamy?*[1]

Annadurai's unambiguous call to throw Naicker's directive over-board was the first direct challenge thrown at him in his political career. Although Naicker had faced opposition before from Ramanathan, Viswanathan, Rajan and others, he had emerged unscathed because of their lack of hold on the masses. But Annadurai had built up a following of his own among party members, students, artists and above all among the masses. When Annadurai voiced his opposition, three important weeklies, *Manram*, *New Justice* and *Pudu Valvu* unequivocally supported his stand.[2] The Dravidian Student Federation, the Dravidian Writers' Association, the Dravidian Dramatist Society, and all those associations with which Annadurai had close contact, stood by him. As a result Naicker's directive was only partially followed.[3]

1 *Dravida Nadu*, 10 August 1947.

2 T. M. Parthasarathi, *D. M. K. Varalaru*, p. 46.

3 Interview with Rajagopal on 5 October 1969.

After openly crossing swords with Naicker, Annadurai, in contrast to either Ramanathan or Viswanathan, did not resign from the party but remained in it in order to consolidate his position. Still he maintained a stiff aloofness, and indeed boycotted the Dravidanad Separation Conference, held at Cuddalore on 14 October 1947. Similarly he stayed away from the Eighteenth Dravida Kazhagam Confederation held at Tuticorin on 8 and 9 May 1948.[1] On both these occasions Annadurai's absence was taken seriously by the delegates, and at the opening session of the Tuticorin confederation Ramasami Naicker was asked to explain Annadurai's absence. Naicker utilized that opportunity to condemn Annadurai and men of his views as 'renegades' whose only aim was disruption of party unity for their own political gain. While he was making this accusation a section of the delegates staged a walk-out. By this demonstration they brought Naicker to see for the first time Annadurai's position and influence among the party members.[2]

As Naicker was not then very anxious to precipitate a crisis and as he was genuinely alarmed at the possibility of a split, he made quickly some conciliatory moves, and as a result Annadurai agreed to preside over the special Dravida Kazhagam conference to be arranged in October 1948. This special conference, held at Erode on 23 and 24 October, was very eventful because Naicker not only praised Annadurai's capabilities as a leader but indicated that he would step down in favour of him.[3]

But this was a sham, to placate Annadurai's followers, and Naicker continued to hold the leadership and spurned the idea of a democratic party organization. On the other hand, Annadurai stepped up pressure for the democratization of leadership within the party as the only means of running it efficiently. But before this move could gain full momentum, Naicker took an extraordinary decision in 1949 which not only damaged his personal

---

1 T. M. Parthasarathi, *D. M. K. Varalaru*, pp. 56-57. Interview with Rajagopal and Kanchi Kalyanasundaram on 5 October and 19 September 1969 respectively.

2 Interview with Rajagopal and Kanchi Kalyanasundaram on 5 October and 19 September 1969 respectively.

3 Ibid.; T.M. Parthasarathi, *D. M. K. Varalaru*, pp. 63-64; A. Maraimalaiyan, *Perarinar Annavin Peruvalvu*, pp. 202-203.

image but set at naught some of the principles which he had been advocating since 1925.

On 14 May 1949 Naicker, along with Miss K. A. Maniammai, met Rajaji at Tiruvannamalai, when the latter visited it in his capacity as the Governor-General of independent India, to preside over a temple function, and had a talk with him for over half an hour. Rajaji and Naicker, though political enemies, had long been good personal friends, and therefore the meeting was not wholly surprising; but as this meeting was likely to cause some speculation in political circles, and as he was not prepared to give room for it, Rajaji later that day at a public meeting said

> our meeting and our talk were entirely about purely personal affairs on which he desired to consult me. They have nothing to do with politics or any public activity of his.[1]

Indeed Naicker maintained the same story, even when Annadurai pressed him at a Tamil conference held at Coimbatore in the last week of May to explain the reasons for meeting Rajaji.[2] However the purpose and nature of this intriguing meeting was revealed by the events that followed. Writing on this unexpected meeting in a recent book, *D. M. K. in Power*, P. Spratt tells us that

> Mr. Naicker consulted him (despite politics they have remained personal friends), and Mr. Rajagopalachari, a good Victorian, replied that as the lady's name had been compromised, it was his duty to marry her.[3]

After this meeting with Rajaji, Naicker, now aged 70, and a childless widower for years, made secret preparations to marry Maniammai, who was 45 years younger than he, despite his uncompromising views about unequal marriages in Hindu society. He also made an application to the Registrar of Marriages on 18 June 1949, giving a date of the proposed marriage. On the following day, in *Viduthalai*, Naicker wrote an unusual editorial expressing his manifest distrust of his followers and his intention to appoint an heir-apparent to look after his personal property and a trustee to

---

1 *Mail*, 14 May 1949.

2 T. M. Parthasarathi, *D. M. K. Varalaru*, p. 66.

3 P. Spratt, *D. M. K. in Power*, p. 38. It appears that Mr. Spratt obtained this information from Rajaji personally.

the party funds.[1] Nine days later, on 28 June 1949, he wrote another editorial in which he said that he was making Maniammai his heir-apparent and trustee to take care of the party funds, which at that exceeded over 500,000 rupees.[2] In the meantime news about Naicker's application to the Registrar of Marriages leaked to the press.

This sparked off a series of crucial meetings among the party members throughout the Tamil districts. Most of them unequivocally condemned Naicker's decision to marry a woman very much younger than himself, in contradiction with his own views on unequal marriages. Two delegations consisting of some of the senior members in the party met Naicker separately and tried to persuade him to give up his proposal, as this would undermine the interests of the party and his own personal image as the 'foremost reformer of this century in the Tamil country.'[3] On 3 July Annadurai wrote a lengthy editorial in *Dravida Nadu* in which he said, more bluntly than anybody else in the party, that either Naicker should give up this decision in the interest of the party or 'he should face virtual exclusion' and political eclipse. Nothing deterred Naicker from sticking to his decision and the marriage was gone through on 9 July 1949 before the working committee could take a decision on the future of the Kazhagam.[4]

As this marriage left the members with no option, they urged Annadurai to abandon his aloofness and take a decision on the future of the Kazhagam. According to their wishes and in his capacity as the general secretary, he convened the working committee meeting on 17 September 1949 in Madras city and passed a no confidence motion in Naicker's leadership. And on the following day, under Annadurai's leadership, a new political party was inaugurated, pledged to adhere to the policies of the parent body, but with a genuine democratic party organization.[5]

---

1 *Viduthalai*, 19 June 1949.

2 Ibid., 28 June 1949.

3 *Dravida Nadu*, 3 and 10 July 1949

4 *Hindu* and *Mail*, 10 July 1949.

5 *Dravida Nadu*, 25 September 1949.

Though the immediate causes of the split were personal, differences arose between Annadurai and Naicker in running the party. Annadurai believed in democratic party organization, in the party system of government and above all in the constitutional progress of the country. Naicker had no faith in any of them. Because of these conflicting views, differences began to emerge soon after inauguration of the D. K. Endowed with leadership, talent and above all political acumen, Annadurai could not vegetate under Naicker's 'despotic leadership'. This despotism is best illustrated in his own speech made at the Salem conference in 1944. In that speech he said emphatically,

> In a way I was doing things as I pleased as president, and I could not be consulting too many opinions. I believed myself to be right and I had no reason to change my view .. As president I could only take the lead and it was for others to do the work.[1]

Alive to Naicker's autocratic attitude, Annadurai built up a following for himself and began to assert his point of view, not with a view to destroy the party, but with the intention of democratizing its leadership so that it could take its rightful place in the body-politic. As Naicker never liked or tolerated individuality and talent in his followers he was anxious to rid the party of Annadurai. But, before this could happen, Naicker himself provided an excellent opportunity for Annadurai to strike a blow. All the prominent leaders, with the exception of Gurusami and Vedachalam, and the majority of talented men, including Naicker's nephew E. V. K. Sampath, Nedunchezhian, Anbazhagan and Karunanidhi, left Naicker to join the new party under Annadurai's 'democratic leadership'.

Considerable skill was therefore needed on the part of Naicker to retain his followers within the D. K. fold. This was his prime concern at least in the first half of 1950's. During this period Naicker remained the arch critic of the D. M. K. often deriding its members as people who shed crocodile tears (kaṇṇīrt tuḻikaḷ); lampooned the new party's policies and made scurrilous personal attack on Annadurai both in the press and on public platforms.

---

1 *Kudi Arasu*, 2 September 1944.

On the political front too Naicker's main concern was to curb the increasing influence of D. M. K. He adopted an anti-Congress stance, collaborated with the Communist Party of India and supported it in the 1952 general elections. It was a shrewd move on the part of Naicker to align himself with the communists at a time when their fortunes were high in the undivided State of Madras, for on the one hand the alliance effectively barred the D. M. K. from coming to any political understanding with the communists and on the other, Naicker himself was able to impress upon his political partners that his power base in the Tamil districts of the undivided State of Madras was considerably strong.

For the Communist Party, this alliance was an unexpected success. Its members from the Tamil districts were returned to the Madras Legislative Assembly in large numbers in the 1952 elections. In fact the Communist Party itself emerged as the second largest single group within the legislature reducing the strength of the Congress to an uneasy working majority in the assembly.

One would have expected Naicker at this stage to reorganize the party on democratic lines and make it a viable opposition to the Congress in the state. But he failed dismally to do this and thereby lost the chances of the party re-emerging as an effective opposition to the Congress in the residuary State of Madras.

During this period the Congress was in a predicament to maintain its hold in the legislature, forced the Congress leadership in Madras to urge C. Rajagopalachariar (C. R.) to abandon his self imposed political exile and return to active politics by assuming the leadership of the Legislative Congress Party. Although he saved the situation for the Congress Party inside and outside the legislature in general, his legislative measures, chiefly the controversial caste oriented educational policy met with stiff opposition from a large section of the public, and later forced him to relinquish his position as the Premier of Madras. This opposition was to some extent by Naicker's movement and gained momentum when Naicker launched a campaign against C. R.'s political leadership. The tactics adopted by Naicker to force C. R. out of office resembled that of his anti-Hindi campaign of 1930's. It was again this campaign which prompted the then Tamilnad Congress Committee chief, K. Kamraj, to carry upon himself the mantle of premiership.

Naicker launched a campaign against C.R. especially when his leadership was required to safeguard the larger interests of the Tamils in the 1950s. Later historical events proved that if C. R. had continued as the Premier for a few more years his stature with the All India Congre. s leaders would have given the Tamils a better bargaining position when state boundaries were redrawn consequent upon the division of the undivided State of Madras into Andhra Pradesh and the residuary State of Madras.

When Kamraj became the Chief Minister of Madras, Naicker changed his posture against the Congress. He regarded Kamraj as a true Tamilian who would safeguard the interests of non-Brahmins. Although this was not the policy of Kamraj or the party to which he belonged, Naicker offered his own reasons for supporting the Congress. He was even prepared to shed his extremist policies towards Brahmins in order to make Kamraj's rule a popular one.

As opposed to this, Annadurai supported not the personalities but their policies. His support for Kamraj was not altogether unequivocal, for Annadurai could not risk his party's political future and its identity as an independent party with a programme and a mission to fulfill in the state. He also rejected Naicker's concept of one party rule, however benevolent it might be. In a true democracy, Annadurai contended, the existence of a strong opposition party as essential and therefore he was preoccupied with organizing his own party then being a supporter of Kamraj.

The steady growth of D. M. K. in the 1950s under the leadership of Annadurai offered a wider scope for young men to play a constructive role in the politics of the country. In May 1956 when the party decided to contest the second general election in 1957, the focus of attention was solely upon the D. M. K. With the D. M. K. in power in 1967, Naicker became more or less one with the ruling forces, and as a result of which he not only lost his identity but endangered the very existence of the D. K. even as a 'pressure group' in the politics of Tamilnad.

CHAPTER—VII

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

Ramasami Naicker sought to raise the non-Brahman community, particularly the underprivileged, to a position of political power and social importance equal to that of Brahmans. He was the first to make an organized effort to awaken the largely illiterate non-Brahman masses and recruit them into his brand of political culture.

Even before Naicker's entry into Tamilnad politics, the national awakening created by the thirst for political freedom made an irresistible appeal to a large number of non-Brahmans, educated and uneducated. The nationalist politicians in their pursuit of political freedom minimized and sometimes even ignored the serious defects in the social structure. This in no way means that they failed altogether to tackle the problem squarely. The non-Brahman and the Brahman leaders in the Congress felt perhaps that any attempt then to solve social problems would weaken the national front and the unity of purpose so essential for fighting foreign domination.

Naicker with a strong sense of social justice evidently differed from them. After his break with the Congress, he concentrated on the backward and illiterate non-Brahmans and organized them under the banner of the Self-Respect movement for social economic and political reform. With his marked agitational skill, he rose to eminence as a leader of a section of the backward and illiterate non-Brahmans. He knew the art of public appeal and could speak to the masses in their own idiom. These abilities together with his past record as one who sacrificed much to the national cause provided him with an image in Tamilnad politics.

Naicker's Self-Respect movement was dedicated to the goal of giving non-Brahmans a sense of pride based on their Dravidian past and culture. This meant of course the rejection of the dogmas, the rituals in the performance of religious rites and ceremonies and the gross superstitions of Hindu religion as practised by the community. Naicker held the Brahmans responsible for the abject condition in which a large section of non-Brahmans lived in all spheres of life. This in turn meant a denial

of the Brahman supremacy and of the agelong faith in *varnashrama dharma*.

In his crusading zest, Naicker followed a radical policy and attacked the very bases of Hindu culture and religion. An attempt was made to apply the dry test of reason even to the fundamental articles of religious belief. The conservatives among the non-Brahmans felt that in trying to do away with social iniquities, Naicker should have proceeded more cautiously and should not have hurt religious susceptibilities. The younger section among the educated non-Brahmans and the economically poor and the socially most backward of them took part in Naicker's crusade. However he forgot that 'religion is as inseparable from social reform as love to man is inseparable from love to God.' He lacked the largeness of vision of other great social reformers. Justice Ranade said, 'if your religious ideas are low and grovelling, you cannot succeed in social, economical and political sphere. This interdependence is not an accident but it is the law of nature.' Naicker spurned these lofty dictums as mere platitudes. His excessive zeal for social reform made him break with traditional culture and religion and do what his own individual reason suggested as proper and fitting. Perhaps he thought without the kind of Tamil society he envisaged and fought for, non-Brahmans would find themselves low in the scale of social and political rights.

It is likely that as a result of the Self-Respect movement some of the grotesque superstitious beliefs based on religion and tradition were largely given up. Brahman priestly order was boycotted to an extent by non-Brahmans but not its rites and rituals in conducting religious ceremonies. Sanskrit language lost its pride of place to Tamil in such ceremonies. Despite these innovations in the social life of Tamils, the priestly order was not completely repudiated, for a new class of non-Brahman priestly order has been emerging in recent years. The Self-Respect marriages have gained wide acceptance among a section of non-Brahmans and after the advent of the D.M.K. rule in 1967 in Madras such marriages have obtained legal sanction. Inter-caste marriages anong non-Brahmans have become less uncommon and as a result one expects that caste distinctions among them would disappear at some distant future. Though visible

disabilities of caste no longer exist, the caste system in all its ramifications still persist in society. Likewise Hindu religion and Hindu deities still reign supreme in the life of Tamils. Atheism may have become a cult among the Kazhagamites but the majority of non-Brahmans continue to venerate their gods and derive solace and strength from religion.

In politics Naicker played a dual role: that of a messiah of the lower strata of non-Brahmans in society and that of a self-aggrandized leader. He gave political education to a section of non-Brahman masses that was left uncared for or only partially cared for by other political parties. In them he created an awareness of their stake in the body-politic and organized them into a political group so that they could play an effective role in the country. In doing this Naicker was consistent and genuine. His sincerity of purpose won him the support of some leaders of the under-privileged communities. As a consequence he succeeded in building a powerful third force in Tamilnad politics. It owed its loyalty and allegiance to none but Naicker. It was the source of unfailing strength and support to Naicker right through his political career. He possessed the ability and diligence to use this force as a powerful political weapon to sustain his position as a leader in his own right and to use it as a pressure group in Tamilnad politics.

As a political leader, Naicker suffered from certain limitations which prevented him from taking an enlightened view of men and matters. In handling political issues, in taking decisions and executing them he was an autocrat, caring little for the views of others. His disdain for democratic approach, his intolerance of men with independent views and his suspicion of intelligentsia had a disruptive effect on his party organization. Party image was put to the test whenever men of talents fell out with Naicker. The absence of competent and enlightened men in the party precluded it from having meaningful discussion of vital issues relating to constitutional processes with the powers that be. Though Naicker had sturdy common sense to understand the general implications of such processes, neither he nor his party seldom subjected them to a critical scrutiny. As a result Naicker's party was invariably in the background, or totally out of the picture, whenever issues of this nature came up for assessment

at their true worth. This was naturally one of the major shortcomings of his political leadership.

This limitation was offset by Naicker's ability to organize agitations and fight issues tooth and nail. He was a zealous propagandist with few rivals in Tamilnad politic. As an assiduous demagogue he skilfully exploited the anti-Brahmanism to weld a monolithic non-Brahman community, although in this mission he failed. Besides he had a knack in exploiting issues, however insignificant, and making political capital of them. In turning situations to his advantage he was ruthless, determined and willing to compromise even cherished principles. A pertinent example is Naicker's eagerness to accommodate the *sanathanists* stand on the temple entry question in order to present a united front to Rajaji's ministry. From strict ethical point of view, though this attitude was deplorable, in the game of politics this is understandable. In such situations political opportunism alone was the sole criterion to Naicker.

Unlike the nationalist politicians, Naicker's political aims were limited: he did not advocate immediate political freedom for the country. A liberal in political attitudes, he favoured Dominion status for India. After his exit from the Tamilnad Congress he pursued a policy of discreet cooperation with the bureaucracy and the British government. He was hand in glove with those who were in authority except for a brief period when the Congress ruled the province, with the one aim of deriving as much benefit as possible for the entire non-Brahman community. In pursuing this aim he was consistent throughout his political career. Likewise he fought vigorously for communal representation for non-Brahmans. Though this safeguard was superfluous in the late 1920's and 1930's, Naicker insisted on its being there. This was perhaps one of the reasons why he came to an understanding with the Muslim League leaders during and after the visit of the Cripps mission to India. Though Jinnah failed to act as spokesman for Naicker's Dravidastan and allied issues, League's support to Naicker remained unaltered.

Naicker's pro-British attitude during this period cannot be understood without considering the role of British policy in regional politics. Modern studies on regional politics in India including that of Eugene F. Irschick point to the fact that the British rulers

did pursue the policy of *divide et impera* in India. In the interest of their self-perpetuation and in the maintenance of their hegemony, the Britishers did not scruple to drive a wedge between the communities and keep the country divided on regional, linguistic and religious considerations. This policy of British rulers in India is brought out in the work *Wood Papers: Wood to Elgin*:

> We have maintained our power by playing off one part against the other, and we must continue to do so.... Do what you can, therefore, to prevent all having a common feeling .... We cannot afford in India to neglect any means of strengthening our position. Depend upon it, the natural antagonism of races is no inconsiderable element of our strength. If all India was to unite against us, how long could we maintain ourselves?[1]

This could well have been the policy of the Britishers from the very inception of their rule in India. The British policy of devolving power by stages from 1917 to 1947 involved finding friendly Indian parties to collaborate in the constitutional process. With the Congress hostile and unwilling to cooperate, other parties must have received official encouragement. This view held by modern authors including Eugene F. Irschick may be broadly true in the case of the Justice Party from the 1920's upto the mid 1930's. When the Madras Congress under Rajaji's leadership abandoned civil disobedience campaign and indicated its willingness to participate in the 1937 elections, there is evidence to show that the British rulers' attitude towards Justicites changed from one of patronage to hostility.[2]

In the case of Naicker there is no tangible evidence to show that he received any encouragement from the British rulers. But then the question arises why Naicker pursued a consistently pro-British policy after his break with the Tamilnad Congress. Two reasons may be adduced. Firstly, Naicker's antagonism to Congress might have induced him to adopt a policy opposed to it, or in the interest of non-Brahman communities he might

---

1 Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. II (Delhi, 1967), pp. 514-15.

2 Nilkan A. Perumal, *Bobbili*, pp. 120-21.

have chosen the policy of least resistance to the constituted authority. Secondly, Naicker might have received unofficial encouragement from the British bureaucrats after the Congress had ceased to hold the reins of office in 1939. Both the reasons might be broadly correct. Very likely after 1939 this might have been more or less a general policy, for the Britishers sought the cooperation of all parties in their war efforts. In Tamilnad also, to enlist Naicker's support, they might have mollified him firstly, by abolishing Hindi as a compulsory subject of study in the secondary schools and secondly, by removing the bar placed on convicted anti-Hindi agitators to enter government service.[1]

Naicker's participation in the provincial politics affected both the style and mechanics of the Tamilnad Congress and the Justice Party. The back of the rigid caste system came to be broken among orthodox Brahmans in the Congress since the mid 1920s. Tamilnad Congress leadership by degrees passed from Brahmans to non-Brahmans, starting at the village level to begin with. K. Kamaraj Nadar's ultimate rise as the supreme boss of the TNCC was part of this process of de-Brahmanization of the Congress.

The impact of Naicker's political activity was strong and direct on the Justice Party. With his entry the party became mass-based. The process of Tamilization was accelerated. The elite was tactfully pushed to the background. Their pro-British stance was modified. And the party was rechristened Dravida Kazhagam.

The cumulative effect of Naicker's movement on the social front was the decline of Brahman social and political prestige in Tamilnad. Political and social relations between non-Brahmans and Brahmans were no doubt damaged at the height of the movement but now a sober understanding is emerging among the non-Brahman elite to consider Brahmans not as competitors but collaborators in building a progressive Tamil community at all-India level.

On the cultural front Naicker's movement through its grass-root organizations brought the message of Tamil nationality to the masses. Tamil language itself acquired capability as the

---

[1] M. R. O., *Public, Services, G. O.* 2069, 18 October 1940.

most powerful vehicle for the expression of modern political thought. There was a flowering of Tamil literature of a short, with Tamil scholars harking back to the cultural greatness of the ancient Tamils. This made easy the rivival of Tamil nationalism and culture. It also expressed itself in a demand for an independent Dravidanad in order to preserve the ethnic, cultural and linguistic identity of the so-called Dravidians. Though this secessionist attitude can be regarded as a direct threat to the unity of the country, we cannot deny that it has promoted politically-conscious linguistic unity. Such regional nationalism far from being detrimental to Indian democracy may lend viability to it. It also points to the possible emergence of a compact federal system in India's political fabric.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1

Draft constitution of the Self-Respect League

1. *Object*

The object of the Self-Respect League is social reconstruction so as to secure Liberty, Equality, and Justice for the individual.

2. *Membership*

Every person

(i) Who has attained the age of 18.

(ii) Who does not hold or exercise religious social or political privileges attached to birth.

(iii) Who is not a priest nor is born in a priestly community may be admitted to membership of the League. But it is open to the Central Council of the League, at its discretion, to refuse admission to any person or to expel any person already admitted to membership.

3. *Subscription*

Every member shall remit in advance to the treasurer of the Central Council an annual subscription of four annas. The year of membership is reckoned from 1st January to 31st December. There shall be no reduction in the subscription to be paid by members joining in the middle of the year. No member whose subscription to the Central Council is in arrears shall be entitled to participate in the activities of the League or of any of its constituent bodies.

4. *Contribution*

Every Union of the League shall levy a contribution from members attached to it on the basis of income. A member who is in arrears with his Union in the payment of contribution levied on him shall not be entitled to participate in any of the activities or privileges of the Union.

5. *Donation*

All donations to the League are payable to the trustee of the Central Council. The trustees shall invest or otherwise dispose of such donations at the direction of the Central Council.

6. *Constituent Bodies*

The League shall consist of
(i) the Conference
(ii) the Central Council
(iii) the Unions and
(iv) the Executive Committees

7. *Affiliated Bodies*

Any local or communal organisation which accepts and strives for the objects of the League may be affiliated to the League at the discretion of and under conditions framed by the Central Council.

8. *Conference*

The Conference of the League shall be convened by the Central Council whether on its own initiative or on a requisition from a majority of the Executive Committees. The venue and date of the Conference shall be fixed by the Central Council. Each Union has the right to be represented at the Conference by delegates in proportion to the number of members on its rolls. The proportion of the number of delegates to the number of members shall be determined by the Central Council. Members of the Central Council and of the Executive Committees shall be ex-officio delegates to the Conference. Every Affiliated Body shall be represented at the Conference by such number of delegates as shall be fixed by the Central Council. Each organisation retains its maximum voting strength in spite of the number of delegates actually present. Delegates from organisations not in good standing with the Central Council will not be entitled to participate in the Conference. Decisions of the Conference shall be binding on all the Constituent as well as the Affiliated Bodies.

9. *The Central Council*

The Central Council shall be elected by the Conference of the League and shall hold office at the pleasure of the Conference. During the period between sessions of the Conference

the Central Council shall serve as the supreme executive of the League and shall carry out measures calculated to further the policy and programme laid down by the Conference from time to time. The Central Council shall consist of 15 or more members elected at a session of the Conference. The Central Council shall elect from among its members the following office bearers;

(i) a President
(ii) Two Vice-Presidents
(iii) a Treasurer
(iv) a Secretary and
(v) two Trustees

The Central Council shall have the right to purchase hold and dispose of property on behalf of the League. The Central Council may frame rules to supplement this constitution. The President of the Central Council shall preside at the session of the Conference of the League.

10. *Unions*

Unions are voluntary associations of the members of the League who agree on the joint prosecution of any programme calculated to further the object of the League and not inconsistent with the policy or programme laid down by the Conference of the League and carried out by the Central Council. The Unions shall frame their own bye-laws subject to the approval of the Central Council. The activities of the Unions are liable to the supervision and control of the Central Council.

11. *Executive Committees*

Every Union shall elect from among its members an Executive Committee which shall regulate admission to the Union and shall generally be in charge of its affairs. The number of members to the Executive Committee shall be in proportion to the number of members on the rolls of the Union in the ratio which shall be fixed by the Central Council.

Source: *Revolt*, 30 January 1929.

APPENDIX 2

Items of provisions given to a purohita

	Names of articles	*Weight in pounds*
1.	Rice	6 lbs.
2.	Red Lentils	1 lb.
3.	Green Gram	4 ozs.
4.	Black Gram	4 ozs.
5.	Pepper	2 ozs.
6.	Cumin seeds	2 ozs.
7.	Mustard	2 ozs.
8.	Sesame	2 ozs.
9.	Tamarind	8 ozs.
10.	Dried Chilli	8 ozs.
11.	Green Chilli	8 ozs.
12.	Perandai (Vitis Quadrifolia)	4 ozs.
13.	Potato	1 lb.
14.	Brinjal (Egg Plant)	1 lb.
15.	Ceppankilanku (Colacasia)	1 lb.
16.	Cluster beans	1 lb.
17.	Lady's finger (okra)	1 lb.
18.	Marrow	1 lb.
19.	Ash pumpkin	1 lb.
20.	Salt	1 lb.
21.	Plantain	4 nos.
22.	Banana Stem	2 pieces
23.	Banana	2 nos.
24.	Greens	2 kinds.
25.	Betel leaves and nuts	10 Naye paise
26.	Banana leaves	5
27.	Coconut	1

Source: Interview with R. Veeraraghavan on 7 October 1969.

APPENDIX 3

The revival of Saivism and its meaning to the Self-Respecters

According to tradition Tirunavukkarasar, also known as Appar, was born in an orthodox Saiva family at Tiruvamur. In his early years he was attracted to Jainism and joined the Jaina monastery at Pataliputram (Cuddalore) as a monk. By virtue of his erudite scholarship in Jain theology, he rose to the highest position in the monastery and was popularly known as Dharmasenar. His sister Thilagavathi watched his change of faith with great distress and implored Siva's help for her brother's return to the Saiva fold. Her prayers were answered: Tirunavukkarasar fell a victim to an abdominal disorder which his fellow Jains versed in medicine were unable to cure. Tormented by his pain, he was compelled to seek the aid of his sister who relieved him of the pain by an invocation to the God of Tiruvadigai. After this he was reconverted to Śaivism. The Jain monks viewed his conversion as a great setback to the spread of Jainism in the Tamil country and so they trumped up many false charges against him and pleaded with the Pallava king Mahendravarman I, (600-630), also a Jain by faith, to punish Tirunavukkarasar. He was subjected to many tortures which he surmounted by the grace of Śiva. This convinced the king of the superiority of Śaivism and so he embraced it. The rest of Tirunavukkarasar's long life was spent in pilgrimage singing the praises of Śiva and spreading the *Bhakti* cult in the South. In the course of his pilgrimage, he met Gnanasambandar, a Brahman Saiva saint of Sirkali in Tanjore district, who was very much younger to him in age and experience. Nonetheless the legend avers that he was endowed with divine powers because he was fed on the milk of divine knowledge by Śiva's wife, Parvathi herself, at the age of three. He too, like Tirunavukkarasar, travelled from one shrine to another and popularized the *Bhakti* cult in the country.

During this time the Pandya kingdom was under the influence of the Jains. The king also professed Jainism, though his wife and the Chief Minister remained Śaivites. They were alarmed at the growing influence of the Jain monks in the country and felt that the spread of Jainism was to the detriment of their own faith. When they were considering the ways to stall the

influence of the Jains, the king took ill and the Jain monks failed to cure him. So the queen entreated Gnanasambandar to come to Madura not only to cure the king of his disease but to save the country from Jainism. Sambandar accepted their invitation and before making his journey he met Tirunavukkarasar, who familiarized him with the ruses of the Jain monks. In Madura Sambandar foiled the conspiracies of Jains, subdued them in debates, cured the king of his disease and his congenital deformity and finally won him for Śaivism. On this occasion over 8,000 Jains were put to death by impalement, which indicates the intense religious strife of the day and the barbarity to which the Śaivites descended to crush Jainism. This tradition, whatever its historical basis, is still very popular among Tamil Śaivites.

The Self-Respecters did not treat the life of these two Śaiva Nayanmars with reverence either in their speeches or writings, instead they stripped them of their legendary fame and treated them as mere crusaders against Jainism. They also believed that when the country was under the way of Jainism the society was egalitarian, the principles of humanism were practised and that divisions based on caste were unknown.[1] Such a healthy social set up was brought to ruins by the combined efforts of Vellala-Brahman machinations. Although Tirunavukkarasar was not directly involved in exposing the Jains on the gibbet, he had familiarized Gnanasambandar with the various aspects of Jainism and its theology before he went to Madura. This knowledge helped him to defeat the Jains in religious disputations. On Gnanasambandar's instigation, the Self-Respecters said, the newly converted Pandya king sentenced the Jain scholars to death by impalement, thus opening up an era of unprecedented religious persecution.[2] They said that the eclipse of Jainism tolled the death knell of the Vellala supremacy in the Tamil country. Then Sankaracharya came on the scene to propagate his philosophy of monism. The Brahmans deserted the Vellalas and rallied round him to enhance their status in society. Under the aegis of Sankaracharya the Brahmans first usurped the ritual functions of the Vellala Adi Saivites in the temple and then Sanskritized the temple ceremonies. Śaivism became Smartaism or Brah-

1 *Revolt*, 1 September 1929.

2 *Revolt*, 18 August and 1 September 1929.

manism. The Vellalas did not assert their rights but meekly submitted to the supremacy of Brahmanism and became the enthusiastic advocates of Sanskrit. The Self-Respecters contended that the Vellalas' eyes were partially opened to their cultural grandeur by the English Missionary Dr. Robert Caldwell, but still they remained under the spell of Smartaism, which could only be dispelled by the magic wand of the Self-Respect movement.[1]

APPENDIX 4

The Erode Programme

The Aims and Ideals of the Self-Respect Party of South India

1. The attainment of complete independence from the British and other forms of Capitalists Governments.
2. The cancellation of all national debts.
3. Public ownership of Railways, Banks, Shipping and other transport services and waters and lands etc.
4. Public ownership without compensation of all agricultural lands, forests and lands etc.
5. Cancellation of all private debts and other obligations incurred by the workers and peasants.
6. Changing of all Native States into one common Indian Federation under the rule of the workers and peasants of India.
7. Improving the life of the workers and peasants of the land by securing for them more than seven hours labour, increased wages, State aid for their unemployed, health resorts, free libraries and other cultural facilities.
8. These shall form the main ideals of the Self-Respect Party.

Self-Respect League: Samadharma Party of South India: Proposals

Preamble:

Whereas, the Self-Respect Party, during the past eight years has very largely succeeded in rousing the attention of the mass

1 *Revolt*, 18 August 1929.

of people to the enormity of their superstitious habits, customs and practices of their religion and caste and of their degraded economic conditions of life.

Whereas, it is becoming increasingly evident that such irrational religious and caste habits and customs and their low economic conditions of life, cannot be done away with, except through the State action, and

Whereas, it is further evident that the various political, social and religious bodies and institutions are even more determined to hold the masses in social, religious and economic bondage and degradation, through their political organization all over the country, and

Whereas, the safeguards adopted by the Round Table Conference for the perpetuation of pernicious religious practices of inhuman caste distinctions are inimical to and destructive of all rational life of the masses.

Objects:

It is hereby proposed to form from the body of Self Respecters, a political party called the Samadharma Party of South India to carry out the following main objects, namely,

(i) To obtain by Constitutional means and methods, the repeal of all irrational safeguards for the private enjoyment of public utilities, for all harmful religious and caste practices and habits, and thereby free the masses from their degrading religious and caste superstitions and habits and improve their economic life.

(ii) To obtain the adoption of adult suffrage for election of members to all Government, Legislative and Municipal bodies, local, Provincial and Central.

(iii) To obtain security of service and minimum wage, to all workers in public and private utility services, such as factories, workshops, railways, shipping, transport, post and telegraph etc.

(iv) To get for the landless workers and agricultural labourers working in cultivable lands, estates, and waters, a reasonable share in the produce of such lands, estates and waters.

(v) To obtain State sanction for utilising temple, church, mosque and religious funds and incomes, for the education, both literary and vocational, for sanitation and housing of the mass population in the country, and for the maintenance of destitute children and orphans.

(vi) To obtain the removal of all caste distinctions among all castes, sects and classes of the Indian community, by removing all caste titles, from all public records and making such retention of caste titles as a disability to hold any kind of public service.

(vii) To secure through State action, municipalization of housing, transport, milk and medical service and establishment of nurseries in Municipalities, Taluk and District Boards and Village Unions.

(viii) To set up party candidates to the Legislative Councils, Taluk District and Village Boards and Unions and Panchayats, to secure the aforesaid objects of the Party.

(ix) Party candidates pledged to these various objects of the Party will be elected for the various Legislative Councils, Taluk and District Boards, Village Unions etc.

(x) These various measures, acts and reforms shall be obtained through all constitutional means and methods such as Council entry and propaganda by means of lectures, discussions and discourses as well as through the press. Rules and regulations for party funds and organisations etc. will be made by a provisional Committee of the Party called for the purpose.

Source: *Kudi Arasu*, 1 January 1933.

APPENDIX 5

Ramasami Naicker's Ten Point Programme

1. In as much as the salaries paid to Government servants are likely to spoil the purity of the minds of the people by making them greedily aspire for them, and in as much as they are unbearably heavy for the economic conditions of India, they should be so reduced as to barely meet the necessaries of life and to make hoarding impossible.

2. Such factories, workshops and means of communication as are necessary for the production of the requirements, comforts and well-being of the public should be owned and controlled by the State.

3. Co-operative institutions should be established with a view to eliminate profiteering middlemen and money lenders and to reduce the hardship and loss of the producers of food stuff (peasants) and consumers.

4. Steps should be taken to do away, by some means, with the present indebtedness of the agriculturists and to prevent their running into future debts.

5. Immediate steps should be taken ..
   (a) To give, at least, a certain standard of education to all children within a fixed period.
   (b) To do away with the evils of drink at least to a certain extent.
   (c) To distribute equally, at least to a certain extent, appointments among people of all classes and religions. The progress of the above should be carefully supervised.

6. Religion should be treated as a personal affair and religious institutions should be treated as private ones. They should have no connection or significance whatsoever with the politics and administration of the State. The State should incur no expense whatsoever or show any partiality or give preference or privilege, or make special provisions on account of any caste or religion.

7. As far as possible no tax whatsoever should be levied on those having an income below a certain amount or on those whose incomes are solely derived by cultivating the lands by themselves. There should be graded and progressive taxation on those whose incomes are higher than what it is required for an average standard of life and on those who derive their incomes through lands cultivated by others.

8. More powers should be conferred on the local boards, municipalities, co-operative societies so as to enable them to carry out the above said programme and executive officers of responsibility and integrity should be appointed to carry out the same.

9. Litigations and complications of law and legislation must be minimised. Death duties should be levied.

10. Such of these items among the above-said programme as could be carried out by means of direct legislation should be done through our legislatures and for such others on which we have no power to legislate we should agitate for power to legislate.

Source: *Hindu*, 1 October 1934.

APPENDIX 6

Programme of work drawn up by Mr. E. V. Ramaswami Naicker

Economic

All possible steps, legislative and otherwise, should be taken to relieve the agriculturists of his indebtedness and to protect him against incurring further debts, and all such measures, as restriction on alienation of land and otherwise.

In order to enable the agriculturist to escape from the grip of usurious money-lenders, credit facilities should be secured for him through the greater extension of cooperative credit societies and land mortgage banks. The land mortgage banks, which ought to be widely scattered throughout the province, must be controlled and managed by the State.

In order to minimise litigation regarding property rights, a more accurate record of rights should be maintained by the State and steps should be taken to put an end to the custom of the *benami* transactions which are now recognised by the courts.

In order to enable the agriculturist to get the maximum price for his products, steps should be taken to eliminate the operations of middlemen as much as possible and bring the agriculturist in more direct contact with consumers and consuming centres.

The present policy of the Government in keeping under State control and management public utility concerns like Railways, Posts and Telegraphs, water-supply, electricity and irrigation, should be maintained and extended.

The facilities enjoyed by Government servants regarding insurance through State agencies like the Post Office should be extended so that such facilities should be available to the public at large.

Steps should be taken to raise the standard of living in the country and ensure a minimum living wage.

Social

Universal primary education should be brought about within a definite period.

All possible encouragement should be given to temperance reform and necessary legislative steps should be taken in this direction.

The abolition of untouchability and the removal of social disabilities based on birth should be brought about.

Political

In all public services due and adequate representation should be secured for all communities in the province with due regard to their population strength and their interest in the body politic.

The present system of administration is top-heavy and steps should be taken to maintain an efficient administrative machinery at reasonable rates and the pay of public servants should be fixed in consonance with Indian standard of life and the economic condition of the country.

The land revenue policy should be so modified as to ensure a more equitable distribution of the burden of taxation with due exemptions where necessary.

The scope and functions of municipalities and cooperative institutions should be enlarged and the appropriate discharge of their executive functions should be ensured through the agency of State controlled officials.

In order to carry out the objects enumerated above, legislative action should be undertaken wherever such action is necessary and intensive propaganda should be carried out with a view to promoting those interests among the masses.

APPENDIX 7

Section 7 (1) of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1932

Whoever:

(a) with intent to cause any person to abstain from doing or to do any act which such person has a right to do or to abstain from doing obstructs or uses violence to or intimidates such person or any member of his family or person in his employ, or loiters at or near a place where such person or member or employed person resides or works or carries on business or happens to be or persistently follows him from place to place or interferes with any property owned or used by him or deprive him of or hinders him in the use thereof or

(b) loiters or does any similar act at or near the place where a person carries on business, in such a way and with intent that any person may thereby be deterred from entering or approaching or dealing at such place,

shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months, or with a fine which may extend to five hundred rupees, or with both.

Explanation: Encouragement of indigenous industries or advocacy of temperance, without the commission of any of the acts prohibited by this section is not an offence under this section.

Source: *Mail*, 5 December 1938; M.R.O., *Public, G. O. No.* 2313, 3 February 1939.

APPENDIX 8

English translation

Questionnaire

1. May I know your name?
2. Your date of birth and profession?
3. Were you at any time a member of any of these parties: the Justice Party, the Self-Respect movement and the Dravida Kazhagam?
4. If yes, could you give your reasons for joining it.
5. Were you a subscriber to any of their party papers? If not, were you in the habit of reading them?
6. Kudi Arasu, Dravida Nadu and Viduthalai: State which one of the weeklies you liked the most? Please give your reasons.
7. How many of your friends used to read the Dravida Kazhagam papers?
8. Did you see any of the dramas enacted by the members of the Drāvida Kazhagam or the films for which they wrote scripts?
9. What did you think of them then? What is your opinion now?
10. Whom do you like: Naicker or Annadurai? Could you give your reasons please?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A NOTE ON THE SOURCE MATERIAL

Anyone attempting a study of the political career of Ramasami Naicker, between 1920 and 1949, must necessarily do a great deal of spade work on his own, uncovering facts from widely different sources. There are very few published works on Naicker.

Sami Chidambaranar's *Tamilar Talaivar*, a lengthy biography of Naicker in Tamil, though eulogistic in character, throws some light on Naicker's political activities up to 1940. K. M. Balasubramaniam's short sketch of Naicker's life in English sharply delineates his personality both as a leader of the masses and as a man. T. S. Tiruvengadam's *The Dravidian Movement: A Retrospect*, P. D. Devanandan's *The Dravida Kazhagam: A Revolt Against Brahmanism* and G. S. Seshadri's article 'The Dravida Kazhagam in Madras' published in the *Indian Affairs Record*, Vol. III, No. 1, February 1957, give briefly a general picture of the movement and its social and political objectives. T. M. Parthasarathi's Tamil work, *D. M. K. Varalaru* gives an account of the Justice Party, the D. K. and the D. M. K. Works of a more journalistic nature, which appeared in recent years, such as Sagar Ahluwalia's *Anna: The Tempest and the Sea* and P. Spratt's *D. M. K. in Power*, also permit insights into Naicker's political activities.

Very few serious studies evaluating the work of Naicker have appeared so far. Robert L. Hardgrave Jr's *The Dravidian Movement* gives a glimpse of Naicker's work in Tamilnad. Eugene F. Irschick's *Politics and Social Conflict in South India: The Non-Brahman Movement and Tamil Separatism* 1916-1929 deals briefly with some aspects of Naicker's political activities during the period 1920-29. This is an excellent and comprehensive work on Tamilnad politics of those times. Apart from this no serious historical work either on the Self-Respect movement or the Dravida Kazhagam is available to students of modern South Indian history.

The documents available at the Government Record Office, Madras, the National Archives of India, and the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library at New Delhi were consulted. Enquiries to the last two repositories showed that in a number of cases very little,

if any extra material relating to this work is available. The available reference material is incorporated in chapter II, section III; chapter III, section II; and chapter IV, section 1. Likewise fresh material culled from the Madras Record Office files, the micro-film copies of the TNCC papers (kindly made available to me by Dr. J. H. Voigt), 1931 Census Reports and other published works as well as documents are included in chapter I; and chapter II, section II and III.

The Nehru Memorial Museum and Library do not have the proceedings of the TNCC. Nor are they available with the Tamilnad Congress Committee in Madras. The relevant material gleaned from the Indian Statutory Commission Report, Vol. VI has been incorporated in the appropriate places. Census Reports of 1931 and 1941 have been consulted. Some relevant material found in the 1931 Census has been included. It is in the 1931 Census one finds fairly complete caste tables provided. Owing to the India Government's preoccupation with the Second World War efforts, the 1941 Census contains very little useful information for the present study.

Proceedings of the Madras Legislative Assembly and Council, Annual reports of various departments of administration and Year books in the Madras Legislative Assembly Library provide helpful material.

In the absence of official party records and files researchers have to depend mainly on reports in the English daily newspapers such as the *Hindu* and the *Madras Mail* as well as the Tamil daily, *Swadesamitran*. These reports are indispensable to a correct understanding of the politics of the period. Micro-film copies of the *Hindu*, including the weekly editions, are available in the University of Western Australia Library at Perth, Australia. Most of the files of the *Hindu* for this period and some volumes of the *Justice* are available in the Madras University Library. The Hindu office in Madras has a good index for their old files which is valuable for research workers. Old files of the *Mail* and *Swadesamitran* are available for consultation in their respective offices in Madras. Naicker's Tamil weekly, *Kudi Arasu*, is an excellent source material. Likewise C. N. Annadurai's Tamil weekly, *Dravida Nadu*, can also be referred to with profit in assessing the political trends in the 1940's. Some of the volumes of *Kudi Arasu* and the English weekly,

Revolt, are available for reference with K. Veeramani, editor of the Dravida Kazhagam Tamil daily, *Viduthalai*. *Kudi Arasu* volumes relating to the period 1925-30 have to be gathered from several sources at Tiruchirapalli, Madurai, Tirunelveli and other district centres. P. Sambasivam of Madras gave several volumes of *Dravida Nadu* and *Kudi Arasu* for consultation. Members of P. Balasubramaniam's family made available to the writer the back numbers of the English weekly, *Sunday Observer*, and some letters and documents relating to the declining period of the Justice Party 1932-40.

Valuable papers bearing on the anti-Hindi movement are available for reference with R. Muthukumaraswamy of Madras. T. P. Vedachalam, the former vice-president of the Dravida Kazhagam, placed at the disposal of the writer important personal papers, besides correspondence relating to the anti-Hindi movement and certain old files concerning Kazhagam activities. S. Ramanathan gave a copy of his book *Gandhi and the Youth* for making a photostat copy. K. M. Balasubramaniam gave a copy of each one of his published works regarding the South Indian political figures of the first half of this century.

In addition to these materials, the pieces of information collected through confidential interviews have been specially helpful in presenting a fairly authentic picture of Naicker's political activities during the period under review.

I. UNPUBLISHED DOCUMENTS LODGED WITH THE TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES,

(A) Proceedings of the following departments:
- Education;
- Home (Educational and Judicial);
- Legislative (Local and Municipal);
- Public; General and Services. Elections
- Revenue;
- Law: General and Legislative.
- Madras Presidency Native Newspaper Reports.

(B) Documents available at the National Archives of India, New Delhi.

(C) Documents available at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

II. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS

(i) Parliamentary Papers

Great Britain. *Parliamentary Papers.*

1914. Vol. XXI. Cd. 7293. 'Royal Commission on the Public Services', Vol. II, 'Minutes of Evidence'.

1919. Vol. IV. Cmd. 203. 'Joint Select Committee on the Government of India Bill', Vol. II, 'Minutes of Evidence'.

1919. Vol. VIII. Cd. 9109. 'Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms, 1919'.

1919. Vol. XVI. Cmd. 141. 'Indian Constitutional Reforms: Lord Southborough's Committee', Vol. I, 'Minutes of Evidence'.

1921. Vol. XXVI. Cmd. 1261. 'Return Showing the Results of Elections in India, 1921'.

1924. Vol. XVIII. Cmd. 215. 'Return Showing the Results of Elections in India, 1923'.

1927. Vol. XVIII. Cmd. 2923. 'Return Showing the Results of Elections in India, 1923 and 1926'.

1930-31. Vol. XXIV. Cmd. 3712. 'Despatches from Provincial Governments in India Containing Proposals for Constitutional Reform'.

1930-31. Vol. XXIV. Cmd. 3922. 'Return Showing the Results of Elections in India, 1929 and 1930'.

1930-31. Vols. I and II. Cmd. 3568 and 3569 respectively. 'Report of the Statutory Commission, Survey, 1930'.

1934-35. Vol. XVI. Cmd. 4939. 'Return Showing the Results of the General Election to the Legislative Assembly in India, 1934'.

1937-38. Vol. XXI. Cmd. 5589. 'Return Showing the Results of Elections in India, 1937'.

(ii) Census Reports and Tables

India. Census Commissioner. *Report on the Census of Madras Presidency*, 1871. Madras, 1874.

India. Census Commissioner. *Census of India.*

.........1881. *Vols. I and III: Madras.* Madras, 1883.

.........1891. *Vol. XIII: Madras.* Madras, 1893.

.........1901. *Vols. XV. Pt. I and XV-A, Pt. II: Madras.* Madras, 1902.

.........1911. *Vol. XII. Pts. I and II: Madras.* Madras, 1912.

.........1921. *Vol. XIII. Pts. I and III: Madras.* Madras, 1922.

.........1931. *Vol. XIV. Pts. I and II: Madras,* Madras, 1932.

.........1941. *Vol. II: Madras.* Madras, 1942.

India. Census Commissioner. *Census of India*, 1961. *Vol. IX: Madras. Pt. XI-D: Temples of Madras State:*

1. *Chingleput District and Madras City.* Madras, 1965.
2. *Tiruchirapalli and South Arcot.* Madras, 1966.
3. *Coimbatore and Salem.* Madras, 1968.
4. *North Arcot and Nilgris.* Madras, 1968.
5. *Kanyakumari and Tirunelveli.* Madras, 1968.
6. *Madurai and Ramanathapuram.* Madras, 1969.

(iii) Madras District Gazetteers' Handbooks and Manuals

Baliga, B. S. *Coimbatore.* Madras, 1966.

.... *Madras District Gazetteers: Madurai.* Madras, 1960.

.... *South Arcot.* Madras, 1962.

.... *Tanjore District Handbook.* Madras, 1957.

Brackenbury, C. F. *Madras District Gazetteers: Cuddapah*. Madras, 1915.

Crole, C. S. *Chingleput District Manual.* Madras, 1879.

Francis, W. *Madras District Gazetteers*: Anantapur. Madras, 1905.

.... *Madras District Gazetteers*: *Bellary*. Madras, 1904.

.... *Madras District Gazetteers*: Madura. Vol. I. Madras, 1906.

.... *Madras District Gazetteers*: *South Arcot*. Vol. I. Madras, 1906.

.... *Madras District Gazetteers*: *Vizagapatam*. Madras, 1907.

Hemingway, F. R. *Madras District Gazetteers*: *Tanjore*. Vol. I. Madras, 1906.

.... *Madras District Gazetteers*: *Trichinopoly*. 2 Vols. Madras, 1907.

Innes, C. A. *Madras District Gazetteers*: *Malabar and Anjengo*. Madras, 1908.

Kelsall, J. *Bellary District Manual.* Madras, 1872.

Nicholson, F. A. *Coimbatore District Manual.* Vol. I. Madras, 1887.

Pate. H. R. *Madras District Gazetteers*: *Tinnevelly* Vol. I. Madras, 1917.

Richards, F. J. *Madras District Gazetteers*: *Salem*. Pts. I and II. Madras, 1918.

(iv) Administration Reports, Legislative Council and Assembly Proceedings, and other Publications of the Government of Madras

Government of Madras. *Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency for the year.*

.... 1903-1904. Madras, 1904.
.... 1904-1905. Madras, 1905.
.... 1905-1906. Madras, 1906.
.... 1906-1907. Madras, 1907.
.... 1909-1910. Madras, 1910.
.... 1924-1925. Madras, 1926.
.... 1925-1926. Madras, 1927.
.... 1926-1927. Madras, 1928.
.... 1927-1928. Madras, 1929.
.... 1928-1929. Madras, 1930.
.... 1929-1930. Madras, 1931.
.... 1930-1931. Madras, 1932.
.... 1931-1932. Madras, 1933.
.... 1932-1933. Madras, 1934.

Government of Madras. *The Working of The System of Government.*

Vol. I. *Administration of Departments.*

Vol. II. *Legislature and Franchise.*

Vol. III. *Courts and Judiciary.* Madras, 1928.

Government of Madras. *Two Years of Congress Rule in Madras* 1937-39. Madras, 1940.

Government of Madras. *Madras Information* (*Annual Number*), 1956. Madras, 1956.

Government of Madras. *Madras in Maps and Pictures* second ed. revised and enlarged. Madras, 1955.

Government of Madras. *Council of Fort St. George* (*Madras Legislative Council*) *Proceedings*, 1909-20. (Madras, various dates).

Government of Madras. *Proceedings of the Madras Legislative Council*, 1921-1936. (Madras, various dates).

Government of Madras. *Madras Legislative Assembly Debates*, 1937-1949. (Madras, various dates).

(v) **Government of India Publications:**

India. Director, Publications Division. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi.*

.... Vol. IX. Delhi, 1963.
.... Vol. XIII. Delhi, 1964.
.... Vol. XIV. Delhi, 1965.
.... Vol. XV. Delhi, 1965.
.... Vol. XVI. Delhi, 1965.
.... Vol. XVII. Delhi, 1965.
.... Vol. XIX. Delhi, 1966.
.... Vol. XX. Delhi, 1966.
.... Vol. XXIII. Delhi, 1967.
.... Vol. XXVI. Delhi, 1967.
.... Vol. XXXIV. New Delhi, 1969.
.... Vol. XXXV. New Delhi, 1969.

III. NEWSPAPERS AND JOURNALS

(i) **Newspapers and Journals in English**

Asiatic Review
The Hindu
The Indian Express
Indian Christian Weekly
The Justice
Home Land
Indian Annual Register
The Light of Truth or *Siddhanta Deepika*
The Madras Times
The Mail
The Malabar Quarterly Review
New Inidia
New Times
The Ocean of Wisdom
The People's Voice
Revolt
The Social Reformer
The Sunday Observer
Tamil Culture

(ii) Newspapers and Journals in Indian Languages

Desabaktan

Dravidan

Dravida Nadu

Gandhi

Kudi Arasu

Kumaran

Manram

Mathrubhumi

Murasoli

Nagara Toodan

Nam Nadu

Navasakti

Pahuttarivu

Por Murasu

Porval

Prachanda Vikatan

Pratidinam

Puduvai Murasu

Pudu Valvu

Puratchi

Samadarsini

Sandamarudham

Swadesamitran

Tamil Nadu

Tamizhan

Tozilalan

Verrimurasu

Viduthalai

IV. INTERVIEWS

A. V. P. Asai Thambi. One of the leading figures of the D. M. K.

M. Bhaktavatsalam, B.A., B.L. Ex-Chief Minister of Madras.

K. M. Balasubramaniam, B.A., B.L. Ex-Justicite. Leading writer in English and in Tamil.

A. T. Gopal. D. K. Leader.

Kāñchi Kalyanasundaram, former Member of the Upper House of the Indian Parliament or Rajya Sabha.

Murasoli Maran, M.A., A leading member of the D.M.K. He was also a Member of the Lower House of the Indian Parliament or Lok Sabha.

Nilakantan Nampudri. One of the important participants in the Vaikkom Satyagraha.

C. P. Raghupathi. Cousin of C. N. Annadurai.

C. V. Rajagopal. A close friend of C. N. Annadurai and a Member of the Madras Legislative Council.

S. Ramanathan, B.A., B.L. Ex-Minister. A close associate of Ramasami Naicker and Rajaji.

E. V. Ramasami Naicker.

Sampath Kumar. Asst. editor of *Pesumpadam*.

K. Shanmugam. Manager of the D. M. K. Office in Madras.

K. Sivagnanam. Leading D. M. K. worker.

M. Thankavelu Mudaliar. Former President of the Kāñchipuram District Board.

Professor M. Varadarajan, M.A., Ph.D. former Vice-Chancellor of Madurai University.

T. P. Vedachalam, B.A., B.L. Ex-Justicite. Vice-President of the Dravidian Federation till 1962.

K. Veeramani, M.A., B.L. Editor of *Viduthalai*.

V. BOOKS, PAMPHLETS, ARTICLES AND LETTERS IN ENGLISH

Administration Report of the League of Non-Brahman Youth Madras, 1926-27.

An Admirer, *Periyar E. V. Ramasami: A Pen Portrait.* Erode, 1962.

Ahluwalia, Sagar. *Anna : The Tempest and The Sea.* New Delhi, 1969.

Aiyangar, R.D.S.K. *Some Contributions of South India to Indian Culture.* Calcutta. 1942.

All Parties Conference, 1928: *Report of the Committee Appointed by the Conference to Determine the Principles of the Constitution for India.* Allahabad, 1928.

Ampalavanar, Rajeswari. 'Social and Political Developments in the Indian Community of Malaya 1920-41 (Unpublished M.A. Thesis submitted to the University of Malaya in January 1969). Kuala Lumpur, 1969.

Annadurai, C. N. *C. N. Annadurai on Official Language.* Madras, 1965.

Annamalai University. *The Annamalai University Silver Jubilee Souvenir,* 1929-54. Annamalainagar, 1955.

Annamalai University. *Dr. Rajah Sir Muthiah Chettiar and Rani Lady Meyyammai Achi: 60th Birthday Commemoration Volume.* Annamalainagar, 1965.

Appadorai, A. (ed.). *Studies in Social and Political Development in India,* 1947-1967. Bombay, 1968.

Appadorai, A. (ed.). *Economic Conditions in South India,* 1000-1500 *A. D.* Madras, 1936.

Arasaratnam, Sinnappah. *Indians in Malaysia and Singapore.* London, 1970.

Archbold, W. A. J. *Outlines of Indian Constitutional History: British Period.* London, 1926.

Arokiaswami, M. 'Origin of the Vellalas', *Journal of Indian History* (April, 1955), pp. 25-?

The Asylum Press Almanack and Directory of Madras and Southern India, 1929. Madras, 1929.

Bala Ratnam (ed.) *Anthropology on the March.* Madras, 1963.

Balasubramaniam, K. M. *The Life of J. M. Nallaswami Pillai.* Trichinopoly, 1965.

Balasubramaniam, K. M. *Periyar Ramasami.* Erode, 1947.

Balasubramaniam, K. M. *The Present Discontents in the Justice Party* (Wake-up Non-Brahmins Series 1.), Madras 1931(?).

Balasubramaniam, K. M. *South Indian Celebrities.* Vol. I. Madras, 1934; Vol. II. Madras, 1939.

Balasubramaniam, K. M. *Special Lectures on Saiva Siddhanta.* Annamalai University, 1959.

Baliga, B. S. *Studies in Madras Administration.* 2 Vols. Madras, 1960.

Banerjee, A. C. *Indian Constitutional Documents.* Vol. I, Calcutta, 1945; Vols. II and III. Calcutta, 1946.

Basham, A. L. *Aspects of Ancient Indian Culture.* Bombay, 1966.

Basham, A. L. *The Wonder that was India*, New york, 1954.

Benson, C. *A Statistical Atlas of the Madras Presidency.* Madras, 1908.

Berna, James J. *Industrial Entrepreneurship in Madras State.* New York, 1960.

Besant, Annie. *India: A Nation.* New York, 1915.

Besant, Annie. *How India Wrought for Freedom.* Madras, 1915.

Besant, Annie. *Wake Up, India.* Madras, 1913.

Besant, Annie. Dr Nair and Annie Besant. Madras, 1913.

Beteille, Andre. *Caste, Class, and Power: Changing Patterns of Stratification in a Tanjore Village.* Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1965.

Beteille, Andre. (ed.) *Social Inequality.* England, 1969.

Beteille, Andre. *Castes: Old and New.* Bombay 1969.

Bhaskaran, R. *Sociology of Politics: Tradition and Politics in India.* New York, 1967.

Boag, C. T. *The Madras Presidency*, 1881-1931. *Madras*, 1933.

Bose, N. S. *The Indian National Movement: An Outline.* Calcutta, 1965.

Bose, Subhas C. 'Letter Addressed to Eelathu Sivananda Adigal on the question of Compulsory Hindi'. Jubbulpore, 26 May 1938.

Bradley B. 'Indian Elections', *Labour Monthly*, Vol. 19 (April, 1937), pp. 229-40.

Broomfield, John H. 'Politics and the Bengal Legislative Council'. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Australian National University, Canberra. 1963.

Buhler, G. (trans.). *The Laws of Manu.* Ed. Muller, F. Max. *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXV. Oxford, 1886.

Burnell, A. C. *South Indian Palaeography from the fourth to the Seventeenth Century A. D.* second ed. London, 1878.

Caldwell, Robert. *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages.* third ed. Madras, 1956.

Caldwell, Robert. *A Political and General History of the District of Tinnevelly in the Presidency of Madras from the Earliest Period to Its Cession to the British Government in A. D.* 1801. Madras, 1881.

Cambridge History of India. Vols. V and VI. Indian reprint. New Delhi, 1958 and 1963 respectively.

Chakrabarti, Atulananda. *India Since* 1947. Bombay, 1967.

Chandra Mudaliar. 'State and Religious Endowments in Madras'. Unpublished Ph.D. dissortation, University of Madras, Madras, 1961.

Chatterji, S. K. *Dravidian.* Annamalainagar, 1965.

Chengalvaraya Pillai, V. S. *History of the Tamil Prose Literature.* Kāñchipuram, 1928.

Chidambaranar, Thudisaikizhar A. *The Antiquity of the Tamils and Their Literature.* Coimbatore, 1938.

Coupland, R. *India: A Re-Statement.* London, 1945.

Coupland, R. *The Cripps Mission.* London, 1942.

Coupland, R. *The Constitutional Problem of India.* Pt. I. The Indian Problem, 1833-35; Pt. II. Indian Politics, 1936-1942; Pt. III. The Future of India. London, 1944.

Desai, A. R. *Social Background of Indian Nationalism.* Bombay, 1959.

Devanandan, P. D. *The Dravida Kazhagam: A Revolt Against Brahmanism.* Bangalore, 1959.

Deivasikhamani, S. K. *The Tamils and Their Language.* Trichinopoly, 1919.

Dharma Kumar. *Land and Caste in South India.* Cambridge, 1965.

Dharmalingam, A. M. *Periyar E. V. R.: Social Reform or Social Revolution.* Madras, 1965.

Dharmu. *Blasted Hopes or Democracy in India.* Bangalore, 1951.

Dorai Raja, K. S. *Presidential Address: Non-Brahman Conference, 9 December* 1917. Salem, 1917.

Doraisami Mudaliar, A. *Address by the Reception Committee Chairman Delivered at the S.I.L.F. Fourteenth Confederation Madras,* 1938. Madras, 1938.

Dubois, J. A. *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies.* Translated by Henry K. Beauchamp. third ed. Oxford, 1920. (This is a reprint of the 1905 ed.)

Eelattu Sivananda Adigal. 'A Letter Addressed to Mahatma Gandhi'. Karur, 1937.

Erdman, H. L. 'Conservative Politics in India', *Asian Survey,* Vol. VI. No. 6 (June, 1966), pp. 338-47.

Fair Play (pseud.) *The Non-Brahmin Races and the Indian Public Service.* Madras, 1893.

Fair Play (pseud.) *The Ways and Means for the Amelioration of the Non-Brahmin Races.* Madras, 1893.

Farquar, John N. *Modern Religious Movements in India,* London, 1929.

Felton, Monica. *I Meet Rajaji.* London, 1962.

Frykenberg, R. E. *Guntur District, 1788-1848: A History of Local Influence and Central Authority in South India.* Oxford, 1965.

Frykenberg, R. E. 'Elite Formation in Nineteenth Century South India: An Interpretative Analysis', in *Proceedings of the International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies,* Vol. I., Kuala Lumpur, 1968, pp. 558-81.

George, K. M. *A Survey of Malayalam Literature. Bombay,* 1968.

Gandhi, M. K. *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth,* second ed. Ahmedabad, 1956.

Ghurye, G. S. *Caste, Class and Occupation.* Bombay, 1961.

Ghurye, G. S. *Caste and Class in India.* Bombay, 1950.

Ghurye, G. S. *Caste and Race in India.* fifth ed. Bombay, 1969.

Gist, N. P. 'Caste Differentials in South India', *American Sociological Review,* Vol. XIX (April, 1954), pp. 126-37.

Gist, N. P. 'Occupational Differentiation in South India', *Social Forces,* Vol. XXXIII (December, 1954), pp. 129-38.

Gopal, Ram (ed.). *Selection from Ingersoll.* 2 Vols. Bangalore, 1931.

Gopala Menon, N. *Short Sketch: The Life of Dr T. M. Nair,* Madras, 1920.

Grady, S. G. *Institutes of Hindu Law or the Ordinances of Manu.* London, 1869.

Gwyer, Maurice and Appadorai, A. *Speeches and Documents of the Indian Constitution.* 2 Vols. London, 1957.

Hardgrave Jr., R. L. 'The D. M. K. and the Politics of Tamil Nationalism', *Pacific Affairs,* Vol. XXXVII (Winter, 1964-5), pp. 396-411.

Hardgrave Jr., R. L. *The Nadars of Tamilnad: The Political Culture of a Community in Change.* Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969.

Hardgrave Jr., R. L. 'Religion, Politics and D. M. K.', in Donald Eugene Smith (ed.) *South Asian Politics and Religion.* (Princeton, 1966), pp. 213-34.

Hardgrave Jr., R. L. *The Dravidian Movement.* Bombay, 1965.

Harrison, Selig S. *India the Most Dangerous Decades.* Madras, 1968.

Hodson, H. V. *The Great Divide: Britain, India, Pakistan.* London, 1969.

Hutton, J. H. *Caste in India: Its Nature Function and Origins.* London, 1946.

In Memorium: Sir P. Theagaraya Chetti. Madras, n.d.

Irschick, Eugene F. *Dravidianism in South Indian Politics.* (Paper read at the Symposium on Dravidian Civilization held at the Centre for Asian Studies, University of Texas at Austin on 5 December 1968). Texas, 1968.

Irschick, Eugene F. *Politics and Social Conflict in South India: The Non-Brahman Movement and Tamil Separatism*, 1916-1929. Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969.

Janarthanam, A. P. (ed.) *Anna Sixtieth Birthday Souvenir.* Madras, 1968.

Jesudasan, C. and Hephzibah. *A History of Tamil Literature* Calcutta, 1961.

Jesuit Scholars. *Religious Hinduism: A Presentation and Appraisal.* Bombay, 1964.

Justice Party Golden Jubilee Souvenir, 1968. Madras, 1968.

Kailasapathy, K. *Tamil Heroic Poetry.* Oxford, 1968.

Kanakasabhai, V. *The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago.* Madras, 1966.

Kanthimathinatha Pillai, V. P. *The Cult of Siva or Lessons in Sivagnanabotham.* Madras, 1961.

Karaka, D. F. *Caste Mark Engenders Our Secular State.* Madras, 1951.

Karunakaran, K. P. 'Politics at State Level', *Now* (4 February 1966), p. 13-?

Kemp, Tom. 'Leaders & Classes in Indian National Congress 1918-1939', *Science & Society*, Vol. XXVIII (Winter, 1964), pp. 1-19.

Kodanda Rao, P. *The Right Honourable V. S. Srinivasa Sastri: A Political Biography*. Bombay, 1963.

Kogekar, S. V. and Park, Richard L. *Reports on the Indian General Elections*, 1951-52. Bombay, 1956.

Kosambi, D. D. *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*. Bombay, 1956.

Krishna, K. B. *The Problem of Minorities or Communal Representation in India*. London, 1939.

Krishna Ayyar, R. V. *In The Legislature of Those Days*. Madras, 1956.

Krishnaswami Aiyangar, S. *Ancient India and South Indian History and Culture*. 2 Vols. Poona, 1941.

Krishnaswami Aiyangar S. *Some Contributions of South India to Indian Culture*. University of Calcutta 1942. (first edition 1923).

Kumar, R. (ed.). *Essays on Gandhian Politics*. Oxford, 1971.

Kumaraswami Chetty, P. T. *Welcome Address: S.I.L.F. Confederation Madras*, 29-30 *September*, 1934. Madras.

Kuppuswamy, B. 'A Statistical Study of Attitudes to the Caste System in South India'. *The Journal of Psychology*, Vol. XXXXII (1956), pp. 169-206.

Leach, E. R. (ed.). *Aspects of Caste in South India, Ceylon and North-West Pakistan*. Cambridge, 1960.

Leach, E. R. and Mukherjee (eds.). *Elites in South Asia*. Cambridge, 1970.

Low, D. A. (ed.). *Soundings in Modern South Asian History*. Canberra, 1968.

Macleane, C. D. *Manual of the Administration of the Madras Presidency*. 3 Vols. Madras, 1885.

Madras Mahajana Sabha Diamond Jubilee Souvenir, Madras, 1946.

Madhavan Nair, C. *A Short Life of Sir C. Sankaran Nair*. Madras, n.d.

Mahadev Desai. 'Letter Addressed to Eelathu Sivananda Adikal' (On Compulsory Hindi). Wardha, 19 October, 1937.

Mahadevan, P. *Subramania Bharati: Patriot and Poet.* Madras, 1957.

Mahadevan, T. M. P. *Outlines of Hinduism.* Bombay, 1956.

Mahalingam, T. V. *Administration and Social Life under Vijayanagar.* Madras, 1940.

Mahalingam, T. V. *Economic Life in the Vijayanagar Empire*, Madras, 1951.

Mahalingam, T. V. *Kanchipuram in Early South Indian History.* London, 1968.

Mahalingam, T. V. *South Indian Polity.* Madras (first ed. 1954), second ed. 1967.

Majumdar, R. C. and others. *An Advanced History of India.* London, 1965.

Majumdar, R. C. and others. (ed). *The History and Culture of the Indian People. The Classical Age.* Bombay, 1954.

Majumdar, R. C. and others (ed.) *History of the Freedom Movement in India.* 3 Vols. Calcutta, 1963.

Mansergh, N. *Constitutional Relations between Britain and India: The Transfer of Power,* 1942-47. *Vol. I. The Cripps Mission, January-April* 1942, London, 1970.

Maraimalai Adigal. *Can Hindi be the Lingua Franca of India?* Madras, 1969.

Marriott, McKim (ed.). *Village India.* Chicago, 1955.

Mayo, Katherine. *Slaves of the Gods.* New York, 1929.

Meenakshisundaram, K. *A Study of the Political Works of Subramania Bharathi.* Madras, 1965.

Meenakshisundaram, T. P. *A History of Tamil Literature.* Annamalainagar, 1965.

Meenakshisundaram, T. P. *The Pageant of Tamil Literature.* Madras, 1966.

Meenakshisundaram, T. P. 'Tiru T. V. K.: The Living', *Tamil Culture*, Vol. VII, No. 1 (Madras, 1958), pp. 16-21.

Menon, K. P. S. *Many Worlds: An Autobiography*. London, 1965.

Mitchell, Nora. 'The Cultural Homogeneity of Tamilnad'. Unpublished M. A. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1963.

Mohan Kumaramangalam, S. *India's Language Crisis*. Madras, 1965.

Mohan Ram. *Hindi Against India: The Meaning of DMK*. New Delhi, 1968.

Moloney, J. C. *A Book of South India*. London, 1926.

Montagu, Edwin S. *An Indian Diary*. London, 1930.

Moraes, Francis, 'Dr. Swaminatha Aiyar, Editor and Writer', *Tamil Culture*, Vol. IV (January, 1955). pp. 40-52.

Mukherjee, Nilmani. *The Ryotwari System in Madras*. Calcutta, 1962.

Muthulakshmi Reddy, S. *Autobiography*. Madras, 1964.

Nagendra (ed.) *Indian Literature*. Agra, 1959.

Nair, B. N. *The Dynamic Brahmin*. Bombay, 1959.

Nair, T. N. 'Caste and Democracy', *Edinburgh Review*, Vol. CCXVIII (October, 1918), pp. 335-70.

Nair, T. N. *The Evolution of Annie Besant*. Madras, 1918.

Nair, T. N. *Principles and Practice of Municipal Government*, Madras, 1916.

Nallakuttalam Pillai, R. G. 'Letter Addressed to Mahatma Gandhi on 17 September 1937'. Srivilliputtur, 17 September 1937.

Nallaswami Pillai, J. M. *Studies in Saiva Siddhanta*, Madras, 1911.

Narasimhan, V. K. *Kamaraj: A Study*. Bombay, 1967.

Narasimhan, V. K. *Kasturiranga Iyengar*. Delhi, 1963.

Narayanaswamy Naidu, B. V. and Vaidyanathan, P. *The Madras Agriculturists' Relief Act: A Study*. Annamalainagar, 1939.

Narayanaswamy Naidu, B. V. and Vaidyanathan, P. *Sir William Meyer Endowment Lectures*, 1947-48; *Madras Finance*. Madras, 1948.

Natarajan, S. *A Century of Social Reform in India*. London, 1962.

Natarajan, S. *A History of the Press in India*. London, 1962.

Natesan, G. (ed.). *Indian Judges: Biographical and Critical Sketches with Portraits*. Madras, 1932.

Nathan, T. A. V. (ed.). *The Justice Year Book* 1929. Madras, 1930.

Nehru, Jawaharlal. *The Autobiography of Jawaharlal Nehru*. New York, 1941.

Nellaiappa Pillai, M. V. 'Letter addressed to the Hon. Chief Minister of Madras regarding Hindi as a Compulsory Subject of Study in Schools.' Tinnevelly, 3 September 1937.

Nilakanta Sastri, K. A. *The Colas*. Madras, 1955.

Nilakanta Sastri, K. A. *The Culture and History of the Tamils*. Calcutta, 1964.

Nilakanta Sastri, K. A. *Development of Religion in South India*. Bombay, 1963.

Nilakanta Sastri, K. A. (ed.) *A Great Liberal: Speeches and Writings of Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyar*. Madras, 1965.

Nilakanta Sastri, K. A. *Sources of Indian History with Special Reference to South India*. Bombay, 1964.

Nilakanta Sastri, K. A. and Srinivasachari, G. *India: A Historical Survey*. Bombay, 1966.

Noelle, Wilfried. *Dravidian Studies: A Review*. Delhi, 1965.

Norman-Brown, W. 'Traditional Culture and Modern Developments in India'. *International Congress of Historical Sciences*. Rapports V. (Stockholm, 21-28 August, 1960).

Owen, H. F. 'The Adoption of Non-co-operation, 1920'. Unpublished paper delivered to the Seminar on South Asian History and Politics, Australian National University, Canberra, on 5 December 1963.

Owen, H. F. 'The Leadership of the Indian National Movement 1914-20'. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Australian National University, Canberra, 1965.

Padmanabha Menon, K. P. *History of Kerala*, 4 Vols. Ernakulam, 1924.

Panikkar, K. M. *The Foundations of New India*. London, 1963.

Panikkar, K. M. *A Survey of Indian History*. Bombay, 1947.

Parker, R. L. and Tinker, I. *Leadership and Political Institutions in India*, 1959.

Paranjoti, V. *Saiva Siddhanta*. London, 1954.

Patel, G. D. *The Indian Land Problem and Legislation. Bombay*, 1954.

Patro, A. P. 'The Justice Movement in India,' *Asiatic Review*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 93 (January, 1932), pp. 27-49.

Pattabhi Sitaramayya, B. *History of the Indian National Congress*. 2 Vols., second reprint. Delhi, 1969.

Pentland, Lady, *The Right Honourable John Sinclair, Lord Pentland G.C.S.I.* London, 1918.

Perumal, Nilkan A. *Bobbili*: *Being A Biography of Sri Varu Sir Ramakrishna Swatchelapathi Ranga Rao, The* 13th *Raja of Bobbili, who was Chief Minister of Madras* (1932-36). Coimbatore, 1960.

Perumal, Nilkan A. *Contemporary South Indians*. Madras, 1934.

Perumal, Nilkan A. *Economic Ambassador*: *The Life and Work of Shanmugam Chetty*. Coimbatore, 1954.

Perumal, Nilkan A. *Rajaji*: *A Biographical Study*. Calcutta, 1948.

Perumal, Nilkan A. *Talented Tamils.* Madras, 1957.

Perumal, Nilkan A. *Top Tamils: Biographical Sketches of Certain Great Men of Tamilnad,* Coimbatore, 1954.

Perumal, Nilkan A. *Two Important Men: A Biographical Record.* Madras, 1938.

Philips, C. H. (ed.). *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon.* London, 1961.

Philips, C. H. (ed.). *Politics and Society in India,* New York, 1962.

Piet, John H. *A Logical Presentation of the Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy.* Madras, 1952.

Pillai, C. K. *Origin and Development of Caste.* Allahabad, 1959.

Ponnambalam Pillai, T. 'The Morality of the *Ramayana*', *The Malabar Quarterly Review,* Vol. VIII, No. 2 (June, 1909), pp. 83-88.

Ponnambalam Pillai, T. 'The Morality of the *Ramayana*—A Rejoinder.' *The Malabar Quarterly Review,* Vol. IX. No. 1, (March, 1910), pp. 45-60.

Ponnambalam Pillai T. 'The Morality of the *Ramayana—A* Rejoinder—II,' *The Malabar Quarterly Review,* Vol. IX, No. 2 (June, 1910), pp. 107-19.

Proceedings of the First Provincial Conference of the League of Non-Brahmin Youth (Central). Madras, 1927.

Proceedings of the Provincial Third Tamilian Conference. Trichinopoly, 1937.

Professor P. Sundaram Pillai Commemoration Volume, Madras, 1957.

Proserpio, Leo, S. J. *L. D. Swamikannu Pillai: A Biographical Study.* Mangalore, 1931.

Purnalingam Pillai, M. S. *Tamil India,* Madras (first ed. 1927) reprint, 1963.

Purnalingam Pillai, M. S. *Tamil Literature.* Munnirpallam, 1929.

Radhakrishna Aiyar, S. *A General History of the Pudukkottai State.* Pudukkottai, 1916.

Raja of Ramnad, *Presidential Address: Fifth Non-Brahman Confederation, 15 and 16 January,* 1922. Madras, 1922.

Rajagopalachariar, C. *Jail Diary,* Madras, 1922.

Rajagopalachariar, C. *Our Democracy, and other Essays.* Madras, 1957.

Raja of Bobbili. *Presidential Address: South Indian Liberal Federation Conference, Madras,* 29 *and* 30 *September* 1934. Madras, 1934.

Rajaratnam, C. (Personal Clerk to the Minister of Education). 'Letter Addressed to the Secretary of the Society for the Protection of Tamil, 8 November 1937.' Tinnevelly 8 November 1937.

Ramanathan, S. 'Self-Respect Movement.' *Kuttuci Kurucami Ninaivu Malar* (Madras, 1966), pp. 38-42.

Ramanathan, S. and others. *The Superstition of Khadi: A Discussion.* Erode, 1932.

Ramanathan, S. and others *Gandhi and the Youth.* second ed. Madras, 1947.

Rama Rao, A. V. *Economic Development of Andhra Pradesh,* 1766-1957. Bombay, 1958.

Ramasami Naicker, E. V. (trans) *The Presidential Address Delivered at the Justice Confederation, Tiruvarur,* 24 *and* 25 *August* 1940. Erode, 1940.

Ramaswami Aiyar, C. P. *Annie Besant.* Delhi, 1963.

Ramaswami Mudaliar, A. *An Appeal to the Voters of the Madras City.* Madras, 1934.

Ramaswami Mudaliar, A. *Mirror of the Year: Being a Collection of the Leading Articles in Justice,* 1927. Madras, 1928.

Ramaswami Sastri, K. S. *The Present Crisis in Hindu Society.* Madras, 1917.

Ramaswamy, V. V. *An Address delivered at the First Ramnad District Justice Party Conference.* Virudhunagar, 1935.

Rangaramanujam, S. G. *Presidential Address: Review of Life and Achievements of Dr. T. M. Nair and Dewan Bahadur O. Thanikachallam Chettiar.* Madras, 1940.

Rawlinson, H. G. *India: A Short Cultural History.* London, 1948.

Report of the Seminar on Casteism and Removal of Untouchability. Bombay, 1955.

Resolutions Passed Unanimously at a Special Anti-Hindi Meeting held on 12 September 1937. Tinnevelly, 1937.

Rudolph, L. I. 'Urban Life and Populist Radicalism; Dravidian Politics in Madras.' *Journal of Asian Studies,* Vol. XX, No. 3 (May, 1961), pp. 283-97.

Rudolph, L. I. and Susanne H. 'Barristers and Brahmans in India. Legal Cultures and Social Change.' *Comparative Studies in Society & History.* Vol. 8, October 1965, pp. 34-49.

Rudolph, L. I. and Susanne, H. 'The Political Role of India's Caste Associations.' *Pacific Affairs,* Vol. XXXIII (March, 1960), pp. 5-22.

Sadasiva Aiyar, T. 'The Morality of the *Ramayana*—A Review', *The Malabar Quarterly Review,* Vol. VIII, No. 3 (September, 1909), pp. 208-15.

Sahitya Akademi. *Contemporary Indian Literature.* second ed. New Delhi, 1959.

Samiappa Mudaliar, N. R. *Samiappa Mudaliar's Address at the 15th S.I.L.F. Provincial Confederation, Tiruvarur,* 1940. Kumbakonam, 1940.

Sarada Raju, A. *Economic Conditions in Madras Presidency,* 1800-50. Madras, 1941.

Saraswathi, S. 'Minorities in Madras State: A Study of Group Interests and their Organization in Madras Politics Since 1819'. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Madras, Madras, 1965.

Satchit, T. M. (ed.) *Who's who in Madras,* 1936. Cochin, 1936.

Sathyanatha Aiyar, R. *History of the Nayaks of Madura.* Oxford, 1924.

Sathianathaier, R. *Tamilaham in the 17th Century.* Madras, 1956.

Sayana, V. V. *The Agrarian Problems of Madras Province*. Madras, 1949.

Seal, Anil. *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge, 1968.

Seshadri, G. S. 'The Dravida Kazagham in Madras.' *Indian Affairs Record*. Vol. III. No. I (February, 1957). pp. 3-5.

Sesha Iyengar, T. R. *Dravidian India*. Vol. I Madras, 1925.

Sethu Pillai, R.P. (ed.) *Tirukkural Ellis' Commentary*, Madras, 1955.

Sewell, Robert. *A Forgotten Empire*. London, 1900.

Shantaben. 'Letter Addressed to Eelathu Sivananda Adikal' (On Compulsory Hindi). Wardha, 3 November 1937.

Silvertsen, P. *When Caste Barriers fall; A Study of Social and Economic Change in a South Indian Village*. Oslo. 1963.

Singh, Baljit. *Next Step in Village India; A Study of Land Reforms and Group Dynamics*. Bombay, 1961.

Sitapati, G. V. *History of Telugu Literature*. New Delhi, 1968.

Slater, Gilbert. *The Dravidian Element in Indian Culture*, London, 1924.

Slater, Gilbert. *Some South Indian Villages*. Madras, 1918.

Slater, Gilbert. *Southern India; Its Political and Economic Problems*. London, 1936.

Society for the Protection of Tamil Language. *Letter Addressed to Heads of all Schools and Colleges and of all Vernacular Sangams in South India requesting them to protest against hasty imposition of Compulsory Hindi on Pupils of Forms I, II, & III*. Tinnevelly, 15 *September* 1937.

Society for the Protection of the Tamil Language. *Resolutions Passed at a Public Meeting held on* 5 *September* 1937. Tinnevelly, 1937.

Somasundara Bharati, S. 'Letter Addressed to Dr. P. Subbarayan, Education Minister of the Government of Madras.' Annamalainagar. 20 October 1937.

Somasundara Bharati S. 'An open Letter to the Hon. C. Rajagopalachariar from S. Somasundara Bharati.' Madras, 1937.

Somasundara Bharati, S. *Tamil Classics and Tamilakam.* Tuticorin, 1912.

Somasundara Bharati, S. *Thiruvalluvar.* Madura, 1929.

Somasundaram Pillai, S. A. *Dr. T. M. Nair, M. D.* Madura, 1920.

South Indian Liberal Federation Propaganda Board. *An Appeal to the Voters of the Legislative Assembly in the City of Madras.* Madras, 1934.

Spratt, P. *D.M.K. In Power.* Bombay, 1970.

Srinivas, M. N. *Caste in Modern India and other Essays.* New York, 1962.

Srinivasa Aiyangar, M. *Tamil studies: or Essays on the History of the Tamil People, Language, Religion and Literature.* Madras. 1914.

Srinivasa Iyengar, K. R. *S. Srinivasa Iyengar,* Mangalore, 1939.

Srinivasachari, C. S. 'Poligar System in the Tamil Country; Its Origin and Growth', *Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission*, 1928, pp. 100-106.

Srinivasan, Thomas. 'Beschi, the Tamil Scholar and Poet'. *Tamil Culture*, Vol. III (September, 1954), pp. 297-313.

Srinivasaraghavaiyangar, S. *Memorandum on the Progress of the Madras Presidency during the last Forty Years of British Administration.* Madras, 1893.

Subba Rao, Khasa. *Men in the Limelight.* Madras, 1918.

Subrahmanian, K. 'The Introduction of English as the Educational Medium in Madras State in the Nineteenth Century.' Unpublished M. Litt. dissertation, University of Madras, Madras, 1961.

Subrahmaniam, N. *Sangam Polity: The Administration and Social Life of the Sangam Tamils.* New York, 1966.

Subramaniam, V. 'Inter-Disciplinary Isolation in Universities', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. IV, No. 27 (July, 1969), pp. 1071-72.

Subramaniam, V. 'Emergence and Eclipse of Tamil Brahmins: Some Guidelines to Research'. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. IV, Nos. 28, 29 and 30 (July, 1969), pp. 1133-36.

Suntharalingam, Ramanathan. 'Politics and Change in the Madras Presidency, 1884-1894; A Regional Study of Indian Nationalism.' Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 1966.

Sundaramurthy, A. *Philosophy of Periyar E. V. Ramasami*, Bangalore, 1959.

Swamikannu Pillai, L. D. *The Madras Year Book*, 1924 second ed. Madras, 1924.

Swami Vedachalam (Maraimalai Adigal). *Is Hindi a Common Tongue* ? Pallavaram, 1939.

Talbot, Phillips. 'Raising a Cry of Secession', *AUFS Reports: South Asia series II.* PT. 8-57. New York, 1957.

Tarachand. *History of the Freedom Movement in India.* Vol. II Delhi, 1967.

Tendulkar, D. G. Mahatma: *Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*, 1920-1929. Vol. II. Delhi, 1951.

Thanikachella Chettiar, O. *Presidential Address Delivered at the Provincial Non-Brahman Conference held at Satara on 16 December* 1922. Madras, 1922.

Thanikachella Chettiar, O. *Presidential Address: The Second Salem District Non-Brahman Conference, 3 December*, 1921. Madras, 1921.

Thanikachella Chettiar, O. *Presidential Address: The Second Salem District Non-Brahman Conference, 3, December*, 1921. *Salem*, 1921.

Thani Nayakam, Xavier S. 'Regional Nationalism in Twentieth Century Tamil Literature.' *Tamil Culture*, Vol. X (March, 1963), pp. 1-23.

The Madras Legislature Congress Party. *Directory of the Madras Legislature.* Madras, 1938.

Thurston, E. *Castes and Tribes of Southern India.* 7 Vols. Madras, 1909.

Thurston, E. *Ethnographical Notes on South India.* Madras, 1906.

Thurston, E. *The Madras Presidency with Mysore, Coorg and Associated States.* Cambridge, 1913.

Tinker, Hugh. *The Foundations of Local Self-Government in India, Pakistan and Burma.* London, 1954.

University of Madras. *History of Higher Education in South India,* 1857-1957. 2 Vols. Madras, 1957.

University of Malaya. *Proceedings of the First International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies.* Vol. I. Kuala Lumpur, 1968; Vol. II. Kuala Lumpur, 1969.

Vaiyapuri Pillai, S. *History of Tamil Language and Literature.* Madras, 1956.

Varadarajulu Naidu, T. (comp.). *The Justice Movement,* 1917. Madras, 1932.

Varadarajulu Naidu Commemoration Committee. *Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu Commemoration Volume.* Madras, 1955.

Vedaratnam, S. *A Plea for Understanding.* Kanchipuram, 1951.

Venkatarangaiya, M. *The Development of Local Boards in the Madras Presidency.* Bombay, 1938.

Vijayalakshmi, S. 'A Short History of Madras Legislature'. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Madras, Madras, 1959.

Viswanathan, K. A. P., 'Letter Addressed to Tiruvarangam Pillai regarding the Inauguration of the Provincial Third Tamilian Conference.' Trichinopoly, 29 November 1937.

Viswanathan, S. V. *Racial Synthesis in Hindu Culture*. London, 1928.

Visswanathan, E. Sa. 'Tiru Vi. Kalyanasundarar's Concept of Caste.' *Tamil Culture*, Vol. XI, No. 3 (July-September 1964), pp. 226-251.

Visswanathan, E. Sa. '*A Critical Analysis of Tiru Vi. Kalyanasundaram's Works*' (Unpublished M. A. thesis submitted to the University of Malaya in January 1969) Kuala Lumpur, 1969.

Wadia, B. P. *Labour in Madras*, 1921.

Weiner, M. *Party Building in a New Nation: The Indian National Congress*. Chicago, 1967.

Weiner, M. *The Politics of Scarcity*. Madras, 1963.

Weiner, M. 'Traditional Role Performance and the Development of Modern Political Parties—The Indian Case', *Journal of Politics*, Vol. XXVI, No. 4 (November, 1964), pp. 830-50.

Woodcock, G. *Kerala. A Portrait of the Malabar Coast*. London, 1967.

Zvelebil, Kamil. 'Bharathi's Youth (1882-1904)', *Tamil Culture*, Vol. IV (April, 1955), pp. 140-57.

VI. BOOKS, PAMPHLETS, ARTICLES AND LETTERS IN TAMIL

Annadurai, C. N. *Cirukataikal* (Short Stories). third ed. Tiruchi, 1968.

Annadurai, C. N. *Iruparam* (Two Weights). Madras, 1969(?).

Annadurai, C. N. *Kamparacam* (The Essence of Kamban). tenth ed. Tiruchi, 1968.

Annadurai, C. N. *Or Iravu* (One Night). second ed. Madras, 1969.

Annadurai, C. N. *Parvati B.A.* Madras, 1969.

Annadurai, C. N. *Teyntupona Tiravitattin Vitutalaip Por* (The Struggle for the Dravidian Independence). Tiruchi, 1947.

Annadurai, C. N. *Ti Paravattum* (Let the Flame Spread). fourth ed. Madras, 1953.

Annadurai, C. N. *Tintamai* (A Collection of Essays on Untouchability). Tiruchi, 1947.

Appadurai, K. *Tamilan Urimai* (The Rights of Tamils). Madras, 1957.

Arasu, Pulavar. *Tiru. Vi. Kaliyanaountaranar* (Biography of T. V. Kalyanasundaranar). Tirunelveli, 1961.

Balasubramanian, C. *Tamil Ilakkiya Varalaru* (History of Tamil Literature). eighth ed. Madras, 1969.

Balasundaram, A. C. *Tiravita Natu* (Dravidanad). Madras, 1949.

Balasundaram, Aru. *Tiravitam Pirintal Valvma?* (Is Separate Dravidanad Viable?). Madras, 1949.

Bharati, C. *Parati Kavitaikal* (Poems of C. Subramania Bharati). fifth ed. 1962.

Bharati, Suddhananta. *Viravilakku Va. Ve. Cu. Iyer.* (The Life and Services of V. V. S. Iyer). Tiruchirappalli, 1947.

Comale. *Cettinatum Tamilum* (Contributions of Chettinad to Tamil Language and Literature). second ed. Madras, 1960.

Comale. *Valarum Tamil* (History of the Growth of Modern Tamil Language and Literature). Madras, 1956.

Elattu Sivananda Adigal, *Tamilum Intiyum* (Tamil and Hindi: A Comparison). Madras, 1936.

Gopalakrishnamachariar, V. M. (ed.). *Kamparamayanam, Yuttakantam* (Kamban's Ramayana). fifth ed. Madras, 1963.

Gurusami, S. *Putiya Kuttucit Tokuppu* (A Collection of Essays written by S. Gurusami in *Viduthalai*). Madras. 1953.

Ilanceliyan, M. *Tamilan Totutta Mutal Por* (The First Struggle of the Tamils). Madras, 1940.

Ilantiraiyan. Calai. *Pututtamil Munnotikal.* (Pioneers of Modern Tamil). Madras, 1969.

Kaivalya Samiyar. *Kaivalya Camiyar Katturaikal* (Articles of Kaivalya Samiyar). second ed. Madras, 1961.

Kalki. *Parati Pirantar* (Bharati was Born). Madras, 1957

Kalki. *Nattuku Oru Putalvar*. (One Eminent Son of the Country). second ed., Madras, 1956.

Kalyanasundaram, T. V. *Intiyavum Vitutalaiyum* (India and Independence). third ed. Madras, 1956.

Kalyanasundaram, T. V. *Tamilt Tenral allatu Talaimaip Polivu* (A Collection of T. V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar's Presidential Addresses delivered at Taluk and District Congress Conferences). sixth ed. 1957.

Kalyanasundaram, T. V. *Manita Valkkaiyum Kantiyatikalum* (Gandhi and Humanism). eighth ed. Madras, 1961.

Kalyanasundaram, T. V. *Periya Puranam*. Madras, 1934.

Kalyanasundaram, T. V. *Tamilccolai allatu Katturait Tirattu* (A Collection of T. V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar's Essays and Editorials Written in *Navasakti*). Pt. I. third ed. Madras, 1959; Pt. II. second ed. Madras, 1954.

Kaliyanasundaram, T. V. *Thiru. Vi. Ka. Valkkaikkurippukkal* (Autobiography of Kalyanasundaranar), reprint, 2 Vols. Madras, 1969.

Kecari. August 15: *Tiravitar Tirunala*? (Is August 15 a Commemoration Day for the Dravidians?). Tiruchi, 1947.

Kuttuci Kurucami Ninaivu Malar. (Gurusami's Remembrance Day Souvenir). Madras, 1966.

Manikkavasagam, N. *Arinar Anna* (Biography of Annadurai). Madurai, 1969.

Maraimalaiyan, A. *Perarinar Annavin Peruvalvu* (Biography of Annadurai). Madras, 1967.

Maran, Murasoli. *En Ventum Inpattiravitam*? (Why We Ask for Dravidanad?). fourth ed. Madras, 1962.

Matava Dasan, Mylai (ed.). *Nalayira Tivyap Prapantam* (Hymns of Vaishnava Saints). Madras, 1950.

Meenakshisundaran, T. P. 'Irupatam Nurrantut Tamililakkiya Varalaru' (History of the Twentieth Century Tamil Literature), *Kalaikkalanoiyam* (Tamil Encyclopaedia), Vol. V (Madras, 1958), pp. 489-97.

Meykantan, S. *Ariyak Katvulkal* (Āryan Gods). Tiruchi, 1929.

Muthiah Mudaliar, S. *Dravidasthan*. Tiruchi, 1947.

Muthiah, Mullai. *Tamilp Periyar Tiru Vi. Ka.* (T. V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar: The Great Tamil). Madras, 1959.

Nacciyappan, Nara. *Irottut Tatta* (Grand oldman of Erode: E. V. Ramasami Naicker). Pudukkottai. 1948.

Namatu Kurikkol (Our Aim: Being the Resolutions passed at the Self-Respect, the Justice Party and the Dravida Kazhagam Conferences). Madras, 1948.

Nataraja Pillai, T. S. *Inti Mclip Payircciya*? (Why Compulsory Study of Hindi in Schools?). Madras, 1936.

Nedunchezhiyan, V. R. *Molip Porattam* (Language Struggle). Tiruchi, 1957.

Pannirselvam, A. T. *Talamai Urai* (Pannirselvam's Presidential Address at the Fourth Tamilar Conference held at Tiruvarur on 27 December 1938). Tiruvarur, 1939(?).

Pantitar, I. Mu. Cu. *Itikacankalin Tanmaikal* (The Qualities of Ithihasas). fourth ed. Madras, 1962.

Parthasarathi, T. M. *D. M. K. Varalaru* (History of the D. M. K.). Madras, 1961.

Putu Russia (First Five Year Plan of the Soviet Union). Erode, 1936.

Ramasami Naicker, E. V. *Arivu Viruntu* (Feast for the Mind). second ed. Tiruchi, 1968.

Ramasami Naicker, E. V. *Indi Etirppuk Kilarcci* (Agitation Against Hindi). Madras, 1965.

Ramasami Naicker, E. V. *Iramayanak kurippukkal* (Notes on the Ramayana). Tiruchi, 1968.

Ramasami Naicker, E. V. Kalakamum Turokamum (Betrayal of D. M. K.). Erode, 1950.

Ramasami Naicker, E. V. *Kantiyar Patattai Erittatu En*? (Why We burnt Gandhi's Portraits?). Madras, 1957.

Ramasami Naicker, E. V. *Kilarccikkut Tayaravom* (Be Prepared for Agitation). Madras, 1965.

Ramasami Naicker, E. V. *Pen En Atimaiyanal*? (Why Women became Slaves?). fifth ed. Erode, 1962.

Ramasami Naicker, E. V. *Pirakiruti Vatam* (Materialism). Erode, 1961.

Ramasami Naicker, E. V. *Talamaip Perurai* (Presidential Address Delivered at the Fourteenth Justice Confederation, Madras, 29, 30 and 31 December 1938). Madras, 1938.

Ramasami Naicker, E. V. *Tamilum Tamil Ilakkiyankalum* (Tamil Language and Literature). Madras, 1960.

Ramasami Naicker, E. V. *Tattuva Vilakkam* (Philosophical Interpretation). Erode, 1947.

Ramasami Naicker, E. V. *Tillaiyil Periyar* (Speeches of Ramasami Naicker Delivered at Chidambaram). Tiruchi, 1948.

Ramasami Naicker, E. V. *Tintamaiyai Olittatu Yar: Vaikkom Varalaru* (History of the Vaikkom Agitation). Erode, 1968.

Ramasami Naicker, E. V. *Tiravita Kalaka Latciyam* (The Aims of Dravida Kazhagam). Erode, n.d.

Ramasami Naicker, E. V. *Vakuppuvari Piratinitittuvam* (Communal Representation). Madras, n.d.

Ramasami Naicker, E. V. *Valkkaittunai Nalam* (A Collection of Naicker's Speeches Delivered at Marriage Functions). Madras, 1960.

Rajagopalachariar, C. 'Rajaji patil' (Rajaji's Reply to the Letter Circulated by Tinnevelly South Indian Tamil Sangam). Madras, 26 November 1936.

Rajan, T. S. S. *Ninaivu Alaikal* (Reminiscences). Madras, n.d.

Rajan, T. S. S. *Tamil Nattil Gandhi* (Gandhi in Tamilnad). third ed. Madras, 1969.

Rajan, T. S. S. *Va. Ve. Cu. Iyar* (Biography of V. V. S. Iyer). Madras, 1946.

Rajaji, 'Rajaji Katitam' (Rajaji's Reply to the Circular Letter). Madras, 26 November 1937.

Sambasivan, C. *Tamilavel Umamakecuvaranar* (Biography of Umamakeswaram Pillai). Madurai, 1964.

Sami Chidambaranar Birthday Celebration Committee. *Tamilarincar Cami Citamparanar Ninaivu Malar* (Sami Chidambaranar Remembrance Day Souvenir). Madras, 1967.

Sami Chidambaranar. *Etirppile Valarnta Periyar E. V. R.* (Ramasami Naicker and his Emergence as a Leader), Madras, 1952.

Sami Chidambaranar. *Tamilar Talaivar* (Ramasami Naicker: The Leader of the Tamils). third ed. Erode, 1958.

Swaminathan, M. *Intuk Katavulkalin Lilaikal* (The Amours of the Hindu Gods). Madras, 1928.

Sethu Pillai, R. P. *Caldwell Iyar Caritam* (Biography of Dr. Caldwell). third ed. Madras, 1964.

Singaravelu, M. *Vinnana Muraiyum Mutanampikkaiyum* (Scientific Method and Superstitious Beliefs. Erode 1934.)

Sivagnana Desikar, S. *Inti Etirppuk Katturaik Kottu* (Collection of Essays Written against Hindi). Madras, n.d.

Sivagnanam, M. P. *Tamilum Kalappatamum* (Tamil and Foreign Loan Words). Madras, 1960.

Sivagnanam, M. P. *Kappalottiya Tamilan.* second ed. Madras, n.d.

SundaresaVandaiyar. *Kalvettu* (Tamil Inscriptions). Madras, 1958.

Swaminatha Iyer, U. V. (ed.) *Purananuru.* fifth ed. Madras, 1956.

Swaminatha Sarma, Ve. *Nan Kanta Nalvar* (The Four Great Tamils Whom I have known). Madras, 1959.

Swami Sivananda Saraswathi. *Nana Curiyan* (Enlightenment or Notes on the Manu). Madras, 1928.

Swumi Elattu Sivanandan. 'Kaṭitam' (Letter to the President of the Tinnevelly South Indian Tamil Sangam). Karur, 8 December 1936: 3 March, 3 June and 25 November 1937.

Swami Elattu Sivanandan. 'Tamilarkku Vinnappam' (An Appeal to the Tamils). Karur, 14 December 1937.

Tamil Valarccik Kazhagam. *Kalaikkalanciyam* (Tamil Encyclopaedia). Vol. II. Madras, 1955; Vol. III Madras, 1956; Vol. IV. Madras, 1956; Vol. V. Madras, 1958; Vol. VII. Madras, 1960.

Tantai Periyar 86-*Antu Pirantanal Vila Malar* (Periyar's 89th Birthday Commemoration Souvenir). Madras, 1964.

Tantai Periyar 87-*Antu Pirantanal Vila Malar*. Madras, 1965.

Tantai Periyar 89*Antu Pirantanal Vila Malar*. Madras, 1967.

Tantai Periyar 90-*Antu Pirantanal Vila Malar*. Madras, 1968.

Tantai Periyar 91-*Antu Pirantanal Vila Malar*. Madras, 1969.

The Society for the Protection of Tamil. 'Velippataikkatitam' (An Open Letter to Rajaji). Tinnevelly, 1937.

Thirunavukkarasu, Marai. *Maraimalai Atikal Varalaru* (Biography of Maraimalai Adigal). Madras, 1959.

Tirunelveli Saiva Siddhanta Manattu Malar (Tirunelveli Saiva Siddhanta Conference Souvenir). Tirunelveli, 1929.

Tirunelveli Tennintiya Tamilc Cañkam. *Tamil Nattukku Inti Ventuma* (Is Hindi Necessary for Tamilnad?). Madras, 23 November 1936.

Tirunelveli Tennintiya Tamilc Cañkam. 'Cuṟṟaṟikkai' (Circular). Tinnevelly, 23 November 1937.

Tolkappiyar. *Tolkappiyam*. second ed. Madras, 1954.

Turan, P. *Parati Tamil* (A Collection of Bharati's Prose Writings). Madras, 1953.

Vaithiyanatha Desikar. *Ilakkanakkotturai* (Tamil Grammar). Madras, n.d.

Varadarajan, M. *Moli Varalaru* (History of Language). Madras, 1954.

Varadarajan, M. *Tiru. Vi. Ka.* (Reflections on T. V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar). Madras, 1962.

Varadarajan, M. 'Tamililakkiya Varalāṟu' (History of Tamil Literature), *Kalaikkalanciyam*, Vol. V (Madras, 1958), pp. 478-89.

Venkataswami, Mylai S. *Kiruttuvamum Tamilum* (Contribution of Christianity to Tamil Language and Literature). Madras, 1936.

INDEX

A

B

C

D

I

J

K

L

M

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. E. Sa. Visswanathan was born in Madras (India) in 1933. He took the Master of Arts degree in 1959 from the University of Madras, India. in 1959, he joined as Lecturer in the Department of Indian Studies at the University of Malaya, Malaysia. He obtained the Master of Arts degree in Indian Studies from the University of Malaya in 1965. The Australian National University awarded him a Scholarship in 1968, which enabled him to live in Canberra, Australia in the years 1968-72 and work for his doctoral degree. The degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History was conferred on him in 1973.

Dr. Visswanathan had served as a Lecturer in Indian Studies at the University of Malaya between 1959 and 1976, and as a senior Lecturer in History at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana from 1976 to 1979. He has been working as a Senior Lecturer in History at the University of Sokoto, Nigeria since 1979.

Dr. Visswanathan has contributed several articles in English to learned journals. His first major work in English is **The Political Career of E. V. Ramasami Naicker: a Study in the politics of Tamil Nadu, 1920-1949.** He has also to his credit eight monographs and several articles in Tamil. He has travelled extensively in Southeast Asia, Australia, the United Kingdom, Europe and Africa.

Happily married, he has four children.